School of Theology at Claremont
1001 1408022

DOES RELIGION PAY?

—o—

W. D. NOWLIN

The Library

SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
AT CLAREMONT

WEST FOOTHILL AT COLLEGE AVENUE
CLAREMONT, CALIFORNIA

11/23 1.25
RB.

DOES RELIGION PAY?

DOES RELIGION PAY?

REVIVAL SERMONS

By

WILLIAM DUDLEY NOWLIN, D. D., LL. D.

Author of

"What Baptists Stand For," "Fundamentals of the Faith,"
"Kentucky Baptist History," etc.

PHILADELPHIA

THE JUDSON PRESS

BOSTON CHICAGO LOS ANGELES
KANSAS CITY SEATTLE TORONTO

Copyright, 1923, by
GILBERT N. BRINK, Secretary

Published April, 1923

Printed in U. S. A.

THIS BOOK

IS DEDICATED BY THE AUTHOR

TO HIS FRIEND

PROFESSOR HOMER FELTS

OF BETHEL COLLEGE, RUSSELLVILLE, KY.

INTRODUCTION

THE author of this volume of sermons is so well and favorably known throughout the sunny Southland, both as an author and a preacher, that he needs no introduction from any one to the people of that vast section. Both for his own sake and for his work's sake, he is held in the highest esteem by his brethren everywhere.

The sermons in this volume are the sermons of a pastor whose life is crowded with the endless, exacting, and responsible duties incident to the pastorate of a large and constantly growing church. These are not carefully written essays but are earnestly spoken messages, and they are recorded just as they came directly from the preacher's lips and heart. Every sermon is on a theme immeasurably important.

The reader of any of these sermons will very quickly discern how vital they are, how human and straightforward and positive they are, every sermon being fortified by a constant appeal to the divine authority and integrity of the Holy Scriptures. The preacher's arguments are driven home by the use of simple, wholesome words, enlivened all along by apt and telling illustrations.

One of the most vital requisites for effective preaching is that the preacher shall be sure of his message. That requisite throbs through all these sermons. The preach-

er's note is the note of one who can say, "I believed, therefore have I spoken." He evidently believes that the pulpit is no place for a religious stammerer. These sermons are uttered in the tone of one who believes with all his heart in what he says, and that the truths he utters are of urgent and eternal importance to his hearers.

One is therefore not at all surprised to learn that when these sermons were delivered they were in God's hands a means of great blessing to many people. Even so, it is confidently believed that these sermons, now to be given a much larger audience by means of the printed page, will continue to prove a present and eternal blessing to many people. God grant that it may be so, for His Name's sake!

GEORGE W. TRUETT.

Pastor's Study, First Baptist Church,
Dallas, Texas.

AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

THESE are sermons that were preached—not written—and taken down in shorthand as they were delivered, without notes of any kind. Of course, it is understood that in rapid, extemporaneous speech there will not be that elegance of diction found in carefully written sermons. It has been thought best, however, to leave the sermons practically as delivered.

Professor Homer Felts, head of the business department of Bethel College, Russellville, Kentucky, led the singing in several meetings in which the author did the preaching. At the close of the second meeting he remarked, "If I had thought of it in time I would have taken all these sermons down in shorthand." He then added, "If we ever hold another meeting together I will go prepared to take them, and will then run them off on the typewriter for you." Our next meeting together was at Adairville, Kentucky, July, 1920, at which time Professor Felts took these sermons down as they were delivered. These are about half the number used at the time.

The author has had large experience in evangelistic work, holding meetings in most of the States of the Union, and in many large cities, for example, Chicago, Louisville, Memphis, Nashville, Atlanta, etc., as well as

in many small villages and country churches. Some of these sermons the author has been preaching for thirty years, and some of them have been preached more than a hundred times.

These sermons, so far as the author is aware, are productions of his own.

Many brethren over the country where the author has held meetings have taken notes of these sermons, and some of them are using them with the author's permission. Within the past decade many preachers who have heard these sermons delivered have asked if they were in print, and when told they were not, have made earnest requests for their publication.

May these sermons go forth with God's blessings upon them.

Yours fraternally,

WM. D. NOWLIN,

Vice-president of
Southern Baptist Convention.

FEBRUARY, 1923.

CONTENTS

SERMON		PAGE
I.	God So Loved the World	1
II.	Sin Self-retributive	15
III.	A Message from Hell to Those on the Way	29
IV.	Christ's Promise to the Penitent Thief	39
V.	An Unanswered Question in Profit and Loss	49
VI.	Does Religion Pay?	58
VII.	The Gospel Plan of Salvation	71
VIII.	The Holy Spirit's Earnest Appeal to Prompt Action	83
IX.	Prepare to Meet God	93
X.	Divine Abandonment	103
XI.	Apostolic Preaching	113
XII.	The Greatness of Service	122

I

GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."—John 3 : 16.

My friends, I do not promise to preach you the greatest sermon you ever heard, but I do promise to preach from the greatest text you ever heard. I am not surprised that this text has been called "the little Bible," "the gospel in a nutshell," and "an epitome of the whole gospel," etc., for I suppose if there is any single text in the Bible entitled to so high praise, this is the text. While the Bible is full of great truths, precious promises, and stern rebukes, this text rises the highest peak in a range of great mountains. If you should take this text, and what it represents, out of the Bible it would be worthless and powerless, so far as salvation is concerned. Without this text the Bible might still be valuable as an ancient history, for it is an ancient history, giving God's dealings with his people in the years of long ago; it might be appreciated for its splendid code of laws, for the Bible has the best code of laws in existence, and nearly all of our laws that are just and equitable are based on the laws of the Bible; it might be valued for its prose and its poetry, for it has both; it might be appreciated for its literary merit, for some of the finest gems of literature are found in the Bible; but so far as salvation is concerned the Bible, without this text and what it represents—God's love for the world, and God's gift to the

world—would be powerless. It is this great text, or what it represents, running all through the Bible that makes it tingle and vibrate with life and power.

I had been preaching a number of years before I was willing to preach from this great text. I felt that any sermon I might preach from this text would be overshadowed by the simple grandeur and sublimity of the text itself. Then I remembered that, while in the seminary, our professor in Homiletics said to a class of young preachers, about eighty in number, "Young brethren, you have never really preached the gospel until you have preached John 3 : 16, for that is the very heart of the gospel." So I decided that I would be willing for my sermon to be overshadowed by so great a text if I could only get the text to lay hold of the hearts of the people and cause them to appreciate, as never before, the great love of God wherewith he loved us. I am willing this night that you may forget this sermon forever if I can only cause you to appreciate the love of God as never before.

I. God's Gift to the World—His Son

God gave to the world his only begotten Son. My friends, when I contemplate this great gift of God to the world I am amazed, yea, I am dazed. It is a staggering thought. We cannot comprehend, or take in the full meaning of this great gift; it is too great for us, but we can apprehend, or lay hold upon it.

1. One reason why we are unable to take in the full meaning of this gift is that *we have nothing with which to compare it.* Nearly all knowledge is relative knowledge. We know things as they relate to other things; we know very little in the abstract. You hear some one speak of his age, say, thirty, forty, or fifty years, and

instinctively you compare his age with your own—something with which you are more familiar. You hear one speak of a mountain so many thousand feet high, and at once you compare it with some hill or mountain with which you are more familiar. You say it is so many times the height of this hill or mountain. You get the height of that mountain relatively. A man who would be considered a rich man in many communities in the South would be considered a pauper on Wall Street and vice versa. These are all relative matters. So I say the first difficulty we have in trying to comprehend the value of this great gift is the fact that we have nothing with which to compare it. Not that there have not been great gifts made, for they have been made. When we think of the great gifts of Mr. Rockefeller to the University of Chicago running into the millions; when we recall the splendid gifts of Mr. Carnegie in the way of public libraries, and when we remember the munificent gift of Miss Helen Gould to the United States Government to help prosecute the war against Spain, and many others who are making great gifts to religion, to education, and to charity, we are constrained to admit that there have been great gifts made, but none of these gifts, nay, not all of them combined are comparable to the gift of the Son of God for the sins of the race.

2. Another reason why we are unable to comprehend the gift is that *the finite cannot comprehend the infinite.* While Jesus was man he was God; while he was human he was Divine. Man cannot comprehend God; the human cannot comprehend the Divine. Such an attempt would be something like trying to empty the Mississippi River into a gallon bucket. But, my friends, while we are unable to comprehend, or take in the full meaning of this gift, we can apprehend, or lay hold upon him and

apply him to our hearts. Yes, he is the "unspeakable gift."

II. The Motive Which Prompted the Gift—Love

God so loved that he gave. No act can be better or worse, as to that matter, than the motive which gave it birth. The motive always determines the quality of the act. The motive does not determine the consequences of an act. That old saying that "All is well that ends well" is only a half-truth, and a half-truth is often the worst sort of an error. Suppose a mother should undertake to give her child a dose of strychnine to take its life, and mothers sometimes do such things, terrible as they are, but she makes a mistake and gives it quinine. The child thrives on quinine. Would you say that the deed was well because it ended well? It was a murderous deed, because murder was the motive. It is all well so far as the child is concerned, but all wrong so far as the mother is concerned. On the other hand, however, suppose the mother should undertake to give a dose of quinine and should make a mistake and give strychnine; the child is dead. Would you say that the mother is guilty of murder? No, she may be guilty of carelessness, but that is as far as guilt can attach. The motive was good, and the motive determines the quality of the act, but the motive never determines the consequences of an act. The strychnine has the same effect as if given with murderous intent. This is a good place to say believing a thing is right does not make it right.

The motive which prompted the gift of the Son of God was love. "God so loved that he gave." The most unselfish act ever committed in the universe of God was the gift of Jesus Christ to die for the sins of the race. Some of our great teachers tell us that no man can

do anything which is absolutely unselfish; that he will always think of what he is to get out of it, or what people will think of it, or say about it. I would not go so far as that, but I grant you that it is hard for man to be unselfish. In other words, it is hard for us to free ourselves from ourselves. No doubt Shakespeare had a feeling when he was bringing forth his wonderful literary productions that he was rendering the world a splendid service, but who can say with any degree of assurance that Shakespeare did not at the same time have a feeling that he was writing his name in history; and that he would go down in history as the greatest literary genius the world has ever produced? That is selfishness, if he had any thought of his fame in the present or future. Perhaps noble old John Milton when bringing forth "Paradise Lost" and "Paradise Regained" felt that he was doing his fellow man a noble turn; that he would quicken the spiritual impulses of men and give them a grander conception of the Paradise of God. But who would dare say that John Milton, that supremely noble soul who rose above those low levels of sluggish life where every mole-hill becomes a mountain and every thistle becomes a forest tree, did not say to himself that "While I am doing my brother a splendid service I am writing my name in history, and in the ages to come my name will be a household word," as it is today? That is selfishness if he thought of his fame in history.

But we might come closer to home. No doubt that young American, Richmond P. Hobson, that noble son of the South, when he sailed on the Merrimac to sink it across the canal to cut off the enemies from the high seas, had a feeling that he would lose his life. Perhaps he said, "I may lose my life in this undertaking, but if I go down, I will go down in the interest of a down-trodden

people, a people who are panting for liberty and who deserve liberty." And he may have said too, "If I go down, I will go down in the interest of the greatest government on the face of the earth and under the grandest flag that was ever unfurled to the breezes." Yes, and perhaps Hobson said in the secrets of his heart: "If I go down in this undertaking, I will write my name high on the scrolls of fame; I'll go down in history as one of the greatest heroes of the Spanish-American war." That very thought is selfishness.

But, my friends, here is an act that is absolutely free from selfishness. God had nothing to gain by the gift of his Son for the sins of the race. He could not be richer, or wiser, or greater, because he is God. He could not extend the bounds of his kingdom, for all the kingdoms of the universe are his; he could not be richer, because the gold of the Alaskas and the silver of the Nebraskas are his, and the cattle upon a thousand hills are his; he could not be wiser or greater because he is the omniscient and omnipotent God. God had nothing to gain by the gift of his Son. It was not what he could get out of us but what he could put into us that prompted the act.

Some one might reply, however, that God gained all these worshipers who fall down and worship him as a result of this gift. But, my friend, did you ever think that all these worshipers only mean so many beggars on God's bounty? If I should have a hundred beggars to come to my door and receive my bounty, have they laid me under tribute to them, or are they under tribute to me? Let us never forget that God did not need us. He was not lonesome; he was not without worshipers. We learn that when God created the waves of the mighty deep and said, "Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther";

yea, when he created the clouds and spread them out like a curtain; yea, when he laid the foundations of this old earth, the morning stars sang together and the sons of God shouted for joy. Long before the sun had ever peeped over the eastern horizon to roll on in his majestic splendor to his hiding away behind the western hills, or ever the forked lightnings had flashed their electric fires around the globe, or the muttering thunders had rolled across the valleys and echoed from mountain peak to mountain peak, or the conies had inhabited the rocks of the mountains, or the wild ass had roamed the plains of the wilderness, or the whales had traversed the depths of the seas, or the proud eagle had soared aloft to dip his pinions in the golden sunshine of heaven, God had worshipers crying, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty." Don't you get the conception, my brother, that you have laid God under tribute to you by allowing him to save you. God so loved that he gave.

Now, having noticed the gift, God's Son, and the motive, love, next let us consider

III. The Extent of This Love—World-wide

God so loved THE WORLD, not a part of the world. We have the same difficulty when we try to comprehend a world-wide love that we had when we tried to comprehend the Gift. No human being can love the whole world, neither can any human being comprehend a world-wide love. People sometimes say, "I love the whole world," but this is a moral impossibility. Your love can never go beyond your knowledge. This is why it is important to have missionary information. You must know before you can feel, and you must feel before you can act. This is the psychological process. But being unable to know the whole world, you are unable to

love the whole world. But God, knowing the condition of every son of Adam's race, whether on the continent or on the isles of the seas, could and did love the whole world. The poet has tried to give us some conception of God's love in the words,

> There's a wideness in God's mercy
> Like the wideness of the sea.

But that does not do God's love justice. If we should compare God's love to a sea, it is bottomless, and they who have waded the farthest discover as they look to the depths beyond that they are wading around the edge. If we should compare God's love to a plain, it is boundless, and they who are on the very frontiers discover as they look to the distance beyond that they have just entered the border-land. If we should compare God's love to a mountain, it is topless, and they who have climbed the highest discover as they look to the dizzy heights beyond that they are groping around the base. No wonder the apostle exclaimed, "The height and the depth and breadth of the love of God, and who can know it?" No man can know it. We cannot fathom its depths nor scale its heights, but blessed be God, we can apprehend, or lay hold upon, this love and apply it to our hearts and lives. You do not have to drink the Mississippi River dry in order to slake your thirst. You drink, and the great river runs on just the same. Neither do you have to comprehend a world-wide love that you may apprehend it.

Now, if God loved the world, and Jesus died for the world, should we not make an effort to save the whole world? In other words do you not think our efforts to save the world should be coextensive with God's love for the world? I always have a feeling when I hear one say,

"I'm a Christian, but I don't believe in missions," that there is something wrong; that he either does not know what it means to be a Christian, or he does not know what we mean by missions. If we love Jesus, we are going to love the people whom he loved. We cannot help it. Some years ago I was supplying the LaSalle Avenue Baptist Church, of Chicago, for Dr. John T. Christian, who was supplying at the same time for Doctor Bernardo, of London, England. While I was there in my supply I got a letter from Mrs. Nowlin saying our baby girl, about a year and a half old, was sick. She said that while giving the baby a bath one day, she discovered that she was swollen on one side. She called the family physician, and he called a second, and they called a third physician. After a thorough examination the family physician said to Mrs. Nowlin, "You write your husband and tell him to fill out his supply and come home." I had one more Sunday to fill. I filled it and started for home in Lexington, Kentucky. When I got home I could see quite a change had taken place in two months' time in the little one. I had her examined by the best surgeons in the county. They said: "It is a malignant growth on the liver, and the only thing that will do any good is an operation, and there isn't much chance then. She is so young and so small that she will hardly recover from so severe an operation—perhaps one chance in a thousand." "Well," we said, "if there is one chance in a thousand, we will take the one." But before we carried the little one to the hospital a poor little dirty, sore-eyed, ragged, black kitten came into the house, and she wanted the little kitten. She ran after it and tried to catch it, but in her swollen condition before she could stoop over and catch it it would get away. She got down on her little hands and knees and crawled after it and caught it. She

hugged the dirty little kitten and loved it, but the other children didn't want the dirty little thing about the house, so they took it away from her and put it out at the door. The little kitten went on its way, and we took the little girl to the hospital. The operation was performed. She never recovered from the shock. She passed away without regaining consciousness. We took the little body home and prepared it for burial; we took it out and buried it under the blue-grass sod to await the voice of God in the resurrection morn. In our sadness we returned to our home, and everywhere we turned we missed that dear little one who was gone. It matters not how many other children you may have, or how many may come into the home after one is taken away, that vacancy is never filled. One day, perhaps a week, after the little one was put in her grave, we were sitting in the sitting-room, nobody saying a word; every one knew what every other one was thinking about. All at once one of the children said, "There is that little kitty that little Annie loved so." They picked it up, and hugged it, and loved it. I got up and walked out into the back-yard to get away from the sight. I was walking around, almost blinded with tears, when I heard little William D., Jr., the youngest child we had living then, talking to the little kitten. He had a saucer of milk and was feeding it, rubbing its back, and saying, "Little Annie loved this little kitty so." That kitten had the right-of-way on that place; no one had the heart to put it out. Brethren, what was the difference? It was just as dirty, and ragged, and sore-eyed as it was before. But that little one whom they loved, loved it, and now she was gone, they could but love the object of her devotion. If we really love Christ, we shall love the people whom he loved and for whom he died.

It is not a question so much of whether the heathen can be saved without the gospel as it is a question of whether we are saved if we refuse to send them the gospel. It is not a question of whether they deserve it or not, nor whether they appreciate it or not; the question is, Does Jesus deserve it, and does he appreciate it?

Let us notice in the last place

IV. The Purpose of This Gift Which Was Prompted by a World-wide Love—Salvation

The purpose of this gift was "That whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The purpose of the coming of Christ into this world was twofold, First, that the world MIGHT be saved, and secondly, that the believer SHOULD be saved. Let us then notice the first point. It says, "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him *might* be saved." Now, this Scripture does not say that the world *should* be saved, but MIGHT be saved. John tells us that "Jesus was the propitiation for our sins, and not for our sins only, but for the sins of the whole world." That is, that he by his death rendered God propitious, or favorable, toward the whole world—made it possible for God to be just and the Justifier of the believer.

There are two extreme views on this point. Our old hyper-Calvinistic, or Antinomian brethren, say Christ made an atonement on the cross for a definite and specific number of individuals, and that that number will be saved—no more, no less. Now if that premise is correct, the conclusion is correct; that is, if they mean by atonement what I mean by it—actual at-one-ment with God. On the other hand is the Universalist who says that "Christ made an atonement on the cross for the whole

world, therefore the whole world will be saved." Well, if his premise is correct, his conclusion is correct; that is, if he means by atonement what I mean by it—actual at-one-ment—actual redemption. The trouble is with the premise in both cases. Christ did not make an atonement on the cross for a definite number of individuals, neither did he make an atonement on the cross for the whole world. In fact, the cross was not the place of atonement but the place of the sacrifice. If you will go with me in your imagination back to the Mosaic dispensation I think you can see a clear distinction between the sacrifice and the atonement. The lamb which was slain was a type of the Lamb of God for sinners slain from the foundation of the world, in purpose. The lamb was slain without the courts by the people and for the people; the high priest took the blood and went into the holy of holies, and there he made an atonement for the sins of his people. The sacrifice was one thing and took place at one place; the atonement was another thing and took place at another place. I am sure you get the distinction. Christ who died on the cross was the real Lamb of God of which the lamb was a type, who was for sinners slain from the foundation of the world, in purpose, but actually slain when he died on the cross. This, the real Lamb of God, was slain without the courts of heaven by the people and for the people, and he, being a great High Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek, takes his own blood and goes into the Holy of Holies and there he makes an atonement for the sins of his people. The sacrifice occurred here on earth, but the atonement takes place in heaven. What was done on the cross was done for the whole world; but what is done in heaven is done for the believer only. If you take the position that Christ made atonement on the cross—that is, if you mean by atone-

ment actual redemption—you will land either on the Antinomian snag or the Universalist snag. If Christ made an atonement on the cross at all it was either for the part or for the whole. This is a self-evident proposition. Christ by his death provided a plan of salvation *sufficient* for all, but *efficient* for the believer only. Christ died for all, rendered God propitious (or favorable) toward all, and offers salvation to all; but only those who accept the benefits of the sacrifice—through repentance and faith—are actually atoned for, or redeemed.

Then, Christ came first of all to provide a plan of salvation sufficient for all, and to make it possible for all who desire salvation to be saved on the terms of the gospel. While salvation is not universal, the offer of salvation is universal. "All men everywhere are commanded to repent," and "Whosoever will may come," and "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." The offer of salvation could not be made more general.

Christ came not only that the world *might* be saved, but that the believer *should* be saved. It is a glorious doctrine that those who are saved by grace are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed at the last day. Jesus says, "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish." If any of those who receive eternal life do perish, that Scripture is false. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation." If any of those who believe on the Son are condemned that Scripture is false. We are told, however, that in certain Scriptures it is implied that the redeemed may be lost. The very first law of interpretation is that the dubious, inferential, or hypothetical Scriptures must be made to conform to the positive statements of God's word. If

you do not observe this rule in interpreting the Scriptures, they lose their value.

Conduct may disturb fellowship, but it cannot change relationship. My son is my son and has my blood in him though he should go to the gallows and die for the worst of crimes. If we are the children of God, made partakers of the divine nature, if we should go to hell, we would go as the children of God, and just that much of the divine nature would be there.

It is cruel and inhuman to suggest that a child of God serves because he is afraid of going to hell. "The love of Christ constraineth us." "There is no service like his who serves because he loves." There are but three motives to action, so far as I know. They are the hope of reward, the fear of punishment, and love. He who serves for reward renders a selfish service; he who serves from a sense of fear renders a slavish service; but he who serves because he loves, is moved by the noblest impulse that ever stirred God, angels, or men. We are wretched ingrates if we fail to love him who first loved us, for it is by his stripes we are healed. The stroke that was due us fell on him. God so loved that he gave; Jesus so loved that he died. Do we so love that we will accept? Love is the greatest thing in the world. It thrills like a poem, it soothes like a psalm, it warms like a flame, it shines like a sun, it sings like an angel. Oh, I wonder if in this world here below, or in the heavens above, we shall ever fully know the matchless powers of love. We may never be able to fathom its depth here below, nor scale its heights on that blest shore beyond; but, blessed be God, we can apprehend, or lay hold upon, this great love of God and appropriate it to our hearts and lives.

II

SIN SELF-RETRIBUTIVE

"We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul when he besought us, and we would not hear him; therefore is this distress come upon us."—Genesis 42 : 21.

This is the statement of Joseph's brothers in the prison-house in Egypt. The famine was not only sore in the land of Egypt but was suffered in Canaan as well. Old Jacob called his sons together and said: "There is corn for sale down in Egypt. Go down and buy that we may save our families alive." These ten sons took their sacks and their money and went down to buy corn. When they came into Egypt they stood before Joseph, their long-lost brother, and they did not recognize him, but he recognized them. Joseph accused them of being spies come to spy out the nakedness of the land, but they bowed themselves before him and said, "My Lord, we are not spies, but to buy food are thy servants come." They said they would not bow before him, but they did. And they said, "Thy servants are twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; behold, the youngest is this day with our father, and one is not." Oh, what a terrible confession—"and one is not"—and that one who was not was the one who preeminently was, and before whom they stood that day. But Joseph said, "No, you are spies, and that your words may be proved, I'll put you in prison," and he put them all into prison and kept them there three days. On the third day Joseph

went in and communed with them through an interpreter, pretending not to understand their language, and required that one of the brothers should be bound in the prison-house until they brought Benjamin. It was then and there that they said to themselves—not to Joseph, for they did not know Joseph, neither did they know that he understood their language—but they said, one to another: "We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul when he besought us, and we would not hear him; therefore is this distress come upon us."

Sin carries in itself the elements of retributive justice, and constituted as we are with memories, consciences, and reasoning powers, we would suffer as a result of sin so long as these faculties live and the guilt of sin is upon them, if there were no hell. There are those who seem to think that if they could by some hook or crook just slip into heaven in all of their guilt, they would be supremely happy. But, my friend, if you could get into heaven in all of your sin, with your hatred for God and for righteousness, and your love of sin, heaven would be a veritable hell to you. You could not exist in the presence of holiness with the guilt of sin upon you. Heaven and hell are going to be what they are to us largely by reason of what we carry with us to these places rather than by reason of what we find there. The great question is not one of simply getting into heaven but one of being prepared for heaven. Sin transformed the Garden of Eden into a brier-patch, and it would transform heaven into a hell. Sin carries in itself the elements of retributive justice, so it matters not where one is, so long as the conscious guilt of sin is upon him he must suffer the consequences of this sin. One's condition is not determined by the place he is in. Let us notice, then,

I. Memory Recalling

"We saw." Yes, they saw the anguish expressed in Joseph's face when they pulled him up out of the pit, but they would not hear him. His appeal for sympathy was utterly ignored; his cries fell on deaf ears and stony hearts. They "would not hear him."

1. It seems to be a psychological fact that *memory in times of sudden distress, or unexpected calamity, recalls the deeds of the past like a panoramic vision.* We have been told by men who have been rescued from drowning that in the last moments of consciousness they seemed to see all the deeds of the past in a moment's time; deeds which they thought were forgotten forever, all came trooping up and stood before them. In a meeting I was holding in Newport News, Virginia, some years ago, a prominent lawyer there said to me, after I had preached this sermon: "Brother, I know that statement is true, for during the Civil War I had the experience. That thing does happen." Some years later I was holding a meeting in Paducah, Kentucky, when an old white-haired man came up and said, "My brother, I want to tell you an experience I had here in the Ohio River just in front of this city when I was a young fellow." He then told a very striking and vivid experience in which he said, "It seemed to me that every sin I had ever committed, and some I had not thought of in years, all unfolded before me." Said he, "My body was as good as dead, but my mind was working like lightning." It is not only the teaching of psychology that the memories of men in times of sudden and unexpected calamities recall the deeds of the past like a panoramic vision, but it is the actual experience of men. Joseph's brothers were unexpectedly thrust into prison. They were expecting no

trouble. They had their money to pay for what they bought, they expected to pay their bills and return. However, they were very unceremoniously and unexpectedly jerked up and thrown into prison. I imagine their minds were working like lightning—there were unfolding before their eyes (in memory) the deeds of the past, and that sin which towered above every other sin in their lives as the mountains tower above the hills, was the sin which they had committed against their brother Joseph. No wonder they exclaimed: "We saw"—"We saw the anguish of our brother when he besought us, and we would not hear him; therefore is this distress come upon us." Memory was performing its natural function and to their great consternation. "We saw—we saw." The deeds we commit along life's journey leave their pictures hanging in memory's hall whether they be deeds of kindness or deeds of crime.

2. It seems to be a psychological fact too, that *time does not erase memory's pictures.* The master-painter comes along with his canvas, his paint, and his brush and with a few strokes of his master-hand he makes us to see towering mountains, verdant valleys, and sparkling lakes. But time will destroy that picture; the colors will fade, the canvas will crumble, and the picture will perish in course of time. When a student in the University of Chicago, I took a course in "Christian Art." I did not take painting. I cannot paint anything. We studied art as art. Prof. Franklin Johnson, who was the teacher of the course, would throw the pictures on the canvas, and we would criticize them. He would frequently say, "Now, young men, that picture I took myself in the Catacombs [Many of you know that under the City of Rome there is another city, where the early Christians who were persecuted had their chapels for worship, their

baptisteries and their cemeteries. Doctor Johnson had been in these places and had taken many pictures], but that picture has been touched up in different ages and kept intact or it would have perished long ago."

That does not seem to be true of memory's pictures. They do not need to be touched up to be kept intact. It had been nearly two decades since these brothers pulled Joseph up out of that pit in the land of Canaan, but they could see there that day in the prison-house in Egypt that agony which was depicted in his face when he plead with them to spare him and they would not. And I imagine that they could see that agony that day just as vividly as they saw it nearly twenty years before on the plains of Dothan. Yes, they "saw," and could still see the agony expressed in Joseph's face.

There is a case of a lunatic who had been many years in an asylum. He finally escaped, and a searching-party found him out over an old deserted coal-shaft. They could hear him mumbling something and see him going through certain motions. They slipped up close enough to hear what he was saying. He was saying: "Down, down, down he goes. My God, how he flies. Now he's at the bottom." He would tear his hair and repeat the same thing over and over again. They wondered what he meant. They thought perhaps it was only the ravings of a mad man, but after they had captured the lunatic and carried him back to the asylum, they decided to investigate. And when they reached the bottom of that old coal-shaft they found there the skeleton of a man. A mystery was then solved, for some years before this man became a lunatic and was put in the asylum, a man had mysteriously disappeared from that community; nobody could account for his disappearance, no motive could be given, no trace could be found of him. But the

mystery was now solved. This man had murdered that man and thrown his body down this old coal-shaft. He remembered how that body went hurtling, hurtling down, and with a heavy thud hit the bottom. Though he had become a raving maniac, and perhaps as a result of this very crime preying upon his mind, as soon as he had his liberty he went back and was going through that awful crime again. Reason had been dethroned, but memory was intact. Time had not dimmed the picture Joseph's brothers saw when they pulled him out of the pit and sold him as a slave. They "saw" and could see that picture still. Memory doing its awful work!

3. *Whether memory is a source of pleasure or a curse to one just depends on the pictures hung in memory's hall.* Every deed leaves its picture in memory's hall, and if you would have the past filled with pleasant pictures you must have the present filled with pleasant deeds. You cannot go back and reset your pictures. You pass this way but once and so must set your pictures as you go. If you live long enough you will be living in the past. Old people live in the past.

In my imagination, I can see an old man and his wife in the evening of life; the sun has fallen behind the western hills; "the frost is on the pumpkin, and the fodder is in the shock"; the fire is crackling in the grate; the old house-cat is stretched across the hearth; the husband sits on one side and the wife on the other. They have not a word to say. They have lived so long together that one knows what the other knows; they have no secrets. As they sit and look at each other they are thinking of the time when they, as a young husband and wife, started out to build a home and rear a family for the glory of God and the good of society. They see those splendid sons and lovely daughters who now have homes

of their own, and who are a blessing to society and an honor to religion. As they pass around memory's hall they see yonder where they helped the widow and orphans in their distress; yonder they took up that poor boy and gave him a home; yonder is where they took in the unfortunate girl who had been kicked out of her father's home because she had been betrayed into sin; here is where they built the mission chapel, and yonder is where they endowed the college. Everywhere they turn they see deeds of kindness and helpfulness. No wonder they doze off and startle in their dreams and look around to see if they are really in the New Jerusalem. That is a foretaste of heaven on earth. But in my imagination I see yonder another picture. I see an old man on a pallet of straw—a mass of aching bones and quivering flesh. I see the marks of sin everywhere on his face. With him, memory is doing its awful work. As he passes through memory's hall he sees yonder where he deceived and debauched a young woman, started her in a life of sin. She has paid the penalty long ago; yonder he sees where he started a boy in a life of sin—he's paid the penalty on the gallows; yonder is where he robbed the bank; yonder is where he wrecked the train; yonder is where he committed murder. Everywhere he turns he sees wreck and ruin. No wonder he cries out in his delirium and says, "The demons, the demons," and has to be chained down to keep him from doing himself bodily harm. My friends, do you think that man would need any fire in hell to make it a hell for him? Think what you may about fire in hell, that would be a hell for him so long as that memory lives with those pictures in it. Yes, memory will be there. Abraham said to the rich man in hell, "Son, remember."

My friends, what kind of pictures are you hanging in

memory's hall, as you pass through this life? Some day you may be saying, "We saw."

Now, having noticed memory recalling, let us notice

II. Conscience Accusing

"We are verily guilty."

Who said they were guilty? Nobody there knew anything about their guilt but Joseph, and they did not know that Joseph knew, for they did not recognize him. It was their guilty consciences accusing.

1. *A guilty conscience accuses when no one else does.* There was no one present to suggest their guilt but their own guilty consciences. A man with a guilty conscience needs no other accuser. A guilty conscience is the worst enemy one can have, and an enemy from which one cannot escape. You can get some respite from any other enemy; you can get away from him and forget him for at least a time, but from a guilty conscience you can never escape, day or night. It will walk by your side as you walk the streets, it will sit by your plate as you eat your meals, and it will rest on your bosom at night in your dreams like a horrid nightmare.. A guilty conscience will accuse when no one else is present who knows of the guilt. "Be sure your sin will find you out." Now, that Scripture does not say, "Be sure the people will find out about your sin," but "BE SURE YOUR SIN WILL FIND YOU OUT." It is a great deal worse for your sin to find YOU out than it is to have the pepole find out your sin. What was the trouble with Lady Macbeth when she washed her hands and perfumed them, and yet could not get rid of the stain nor the scent of blood? Ah, that blood was not on her hands, it was on her conscience. What was the trouble with Jean Val Jean in Victor Hugo's great novel, when he came down

and took his stand by the side of the convicts and confessed that he was an escaped convict? Nobody knew of his guilt. To all appearances he was an honorable and upright citizen, living an exemplary life. It was his guilty conscience. His sin had found him out, and he could no longer stand the lashings of a guilty conscience.

What was the trouble with Herod after the death of John the Baptist, when Christ was performing his wonderful works, and Herod said, "It is John the Baptist"? Why did he think it was John? Nobody else thought so. It was Herod's guilty conscience. He had put John to death without cause, and he thought John had come back to requite him for his sin. What was the trouble with Ahab when Elijah came and met him in Naboth's vineyard? Ahab said to Elijah, "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" Why did he call the prophet his enemy? The last time they separated, they separated friends; and why should he now think Elijah was his enemy? The very place where they met tells the story. It was in Naboth's vineyard. Naboth whom he had foully murdered and whose vineyard he had taken possession of without right! The very appearance of the prophet made Ahab's guilty conscience rise up and smite him. "Sin doth make cowards of us all."

2. *If our consciences accuse us, what about God who is greater than our consciences?* Surely, if we condemn ourselves, the God of all holiness and perfection cannot hold us guiltless. "We are verily guilty," says the conscience of every guilty sinner, and thank God that it is so. In this is our hope.

3. *The only way to have a good conscience is to have a clean heart.* We are so constituted that we cannot be happy with the guilt of sin on us. And it is a fine thing

that this is true. That is the very thing that causes us to seek relief from our guilt. The old Greeks, a long time ago, without any Bible knew man could not be happy with the guilt of his sin on him, and so the Greeks at death were made to pass through the fabulous waters, the Lethean waters, or waters of forgetfulness, so they could pass out into the Elysian Fields, or the Greeks' Paradise, and be happy. The old Greek knew man could not be happy even in Paradise with the guilt of sin on him, and so he had to devise some plan by which he could forget his sin and leave its guilt behind. But, friends, I do not invite you tonight to the fabulous waters of Lethe, but to that fountain opened up in the house of King David for sin and uncleanness. Yes,

There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel's veins;
And sinners, plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains.

The dying thief rejoiced to see
That fountain in his day;
And there may I, though vile as he,
Wash all my sins away.

Here is the fountain of forgetfulness, dear lost sinner, and the only fountain from which you can get cleansing. It is the blood of Jesus Christ that can destroy the power and remove the guilt of sin and transform life. Oh, that gnawing, guilty conscience. There may be some man here this night who would give his right arm if he could get rid of his guilty conscience. The murderer tonight may hear the death-groan, and feel the icy hand of his victim clutching for his throat. Oh, for relief! There is but one remedy—the blood. Come under the blood.

The third and last point I wish to notice is:

III. Reason Condemning

"Therefore is this distress come upon us." You will observe how these men reason out, justly and logically, their own condemnation. "Therefore," because of this fact.

1. *Reason calls for the punishment of sin.* There is not a reasonable man, nor a reasoning man living but will admit that sin must be punished somewhere, somehow, and to some extent. The thief who died on the cross by the Saviour said, "We are receiving the due rewards of our deeds." He knew his sin deserved punishment. Bob Ingersoll said: "I believe in eternal, everlasting, inexorable justice; that's my doctrine." When Bob Ingersoll said, "I believe in eternal, everlasting, inexorable justice," he said he believed that every sin must be adequately punished, for that is strict justice. Now, the man of reason might say, "Yes, I believe every sin must be punished, but I do not believe in a punishment out of proportion to the sin committed." All right, that is all I would ask you to admit. If you do not believe in a punishment "out of proportion," you believe in a punishment that is in proportion. That is the logic of it. Your statement means, then, that every sin must be punished and must be adequately punished. "Yes," says the man of reason, "I believe every sin must be adequately punished, but I believe all sins are adequately punished in this life." I can prove to any man with a logical mind that not all sins are adequately punished in this life. Suppose a villain comes into your community and outrages and murders one of your innocent, sweet girls, and he is captured and hung up by the neck until he is dead (either by the mob or by the law); now do you believe that is an adequate punishment? The reply is,

"Yes, he ought to die." Let me say just here that it is better always to let the law take its course. We have no right to take a man out and take his life without the sanction of law, and when we do it, we add crime to crime. I was in a meeting in Franklin, Kentucky, when the guard killed six men in Lexington, who were trying to take the negro, Will Luckett, out of the hands of the law to murder him. I said that night in Franklin, when there was much excitement and some condemnation of the Governor for allowing six men to be killed in protecting the life of one negro criminal who deserved death, and was already sentenced to die, that Governor Morrow did his duty, and that those officers did their duty, and if it had been necessary they ought to have killed a thousand men, not to protect the life of the negro (that was already forfeited), but to protect the honor of the State and the majesty of the law. Mob violence is never justifiable, and such things breed contempt for law and make both life and property unsafe. We must uphold the majesty of the law. But to the man of reason, I reply that you admit that every sin must be punished, and that every sin must be adequately punished, and that hanging is an adequate punishment for that crime. Then what about the man who commits that crime and escapes the gallows, and some do? The negro Luckett, whom I have just mentioned, admitted before executed that he had outraged and murdered three other women, and he had escaped the penalty in the other cases. If all sins must be adequately punished, and if hanging is an adequate punishment for that crime, then there must be a place beyond this life where the wrongs shall be righted, for not all sins are adequately punished here.

The man of reason might reply, however, "Yes, I believe every sin must be adequately punished, and I admit that not all sins are adequately punished here, but I do not believe that a man in this short life can commit sins enough to justify eternal punishment." Now, my friend, how did you learn that the punishment of a crime depends on the length of time it takes to commit it? I can prove to any man of logical mind that the time element never enters into the degree of a crime. It might take a man half the night to break into my pantry and steal a loaf of bread, but that same man might draw his revolver and blow my brains out in a moment of time. I say to the man of reason, Which is the greater crime? He says, "The latter, to be sure." When you admit that, you then and there eliminate the time element from the degree of a crime. I never heard a lawyer, with all the tricks of the trade, who would stoop so low as to say, "My client does not deserve much punishment because it did not take him long to commit the crime." Then, further, it is well to remember that condemnation is not in the number of sins, nor the degree of sins committed, but in the fact of sin. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." It does not say, "The soul that commits forty thousand sins shall die."

Now it so happens that reason and God's word are agreed on these points. The Bible teaches that every sin shall be punished and that every sin shall be adequately punished, for every deed shall receive a due recompense of reward. That is adequate punishment. The Bible also teaches that not all sins are adequately punished in this life. David says in the Seventy-third Psalm, "When I beheld the prosperity of the wicked and saw how his eyes stood out with fatness, and that he had more than heart could wish, and that the Lord

did not chastise him every morning as he did me, I was envious, my feet had well nigh slipped, I said, I have cleansed my heart in vain." But after David went into the sanctuary of God, he said, "Then understood I their end." He then admits that he was foolish, ignorant, and brutish to think such thoughts. David is simply saying that God does not always reward the wicked here; that he often flourishes apparently more than the righteous, but that in the latter end the wicked will be brought into desolation and utterly consumed with terrors. Thus it will be seen that both reason and the Bible teach that every sin must be punished, that every sin must be adequately punished, that not all sins are adequately punished in this life; therefore reason and the Bible demand a place beyond this life where sin shall be adequately punished, where the wrong shall be righted.

The physician who opens up your disease and convinces you that you are in a terrible condition and then offers you no remedy, renders you no service; but that physician who shows you your true condition and then offers you a remedy, an infallible remedy, and one within your reach—yea, without money and without price—is your friend. Tonight I have shown you the awfulness of sin, and now I come to you with the remedy, the only remedy—the blood. "The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin." "Whosoever will may come," and "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." Lost man or woman, are you tired of sin, would you like to have relief from the guilt and power of sin this night? Do you feel godly sorrow working in your heart? Then believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved. Will you come while we sing?

III

A MESSAGE FROM HELL TO THOSE ON THE WAY

"I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send Lazarus to my father's house: for I have five brothers; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment."—Luke 16 : 27, 28.

No doubt some in this congregation think there is no text for this subject, but I think I can show you that there is one. The rich man in hell cried to Father Abraham and said: "I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send Lazarus to my father's house: for I have five brothers; that he may testify unto them, *lest they also come into this place of torment.*" This is a message from hell, a message from the rich man in hell—he wanted to send to his brothers who were on the way. The message is that they "come not into this place of torment."

There are several things suggested by this text: First, that there is a hell, however much some may doubt it; secondly, that there are those in hell, however undesirable this may be; thirdly, that hell is a place of undesirable abode, however many go there. Now, I do not preach on this subject because it is pleasant to harrow your feelings and exasperate your spirits, but I do it to be true to you, true to God, and true to myself. I am inclined to think that the unpleasantness of the subject is the very reason why we have so little preaching on hell. No doubt if we had more preaching on hell, we should have fewer people going to hell. If we had more hell in the pulpit,

we should have less hell in the pew. It is the business of the preacher to acquaint people with that place to which they are fast tending, and men would better be disturbed in their sins than to be damned for their sins.

I am by this subject very much as my oldest boy was by his cat. [1] When my second son, William D., Jr., was born (August 16, 1898), my oldest son, Dudley C., was a few years old, and while the mother was sick the cook failed to come one morning. Mrs. Nowlin's mother who lived with us said to me, "The cook hasn't come and it is getting late, so you go and make a fire in the stove, and I'll get breakfast." Well, I went out and made the fire, and while out I examined and found that there was plenty cooked for breakfast, so I said, "Mother, I don't think you will have to cook anything, just warm up some breakfast." She went out and fried some breakfast bacon, made some coffee, and warmed up some biscuits, and that was our breakfast that morning. As soon as I had returned thanks that boy of mine looked over the table and said, "What in the world is the matter with this breakfast this morning?" His grandmother said: "There is nothing the matter; the cook didn't come, and I had to get breakfast this morning." The boy replied, "I never saw such a breakfast as this before." Grandmother said, "Well, you hush and don't make any further comments on the breakfast." The boy said nothing more, but while he was eating, his little cat about half-grown climbed up into his chair and was peeping upon the table. The boy deliberately picked up the cat and held it up over the table without a word. I said, "Son, what do you mean?" He said, "Papa, I thought if this cat could see what is on the table it would not be so anxious to get up

[1] Many evangelists are using this story, and some of them have it badly mixed, and badly located. It occurred in Nicholasville, Kentucky, in August, 1898, while I was in my first pastorate, after leaving the seminary.

here." Now I feel very much the same way about hell. If I could hold you over hell and let you see what hell is, you would not be so anxious to go there. I think this is the reason why the Lord said so much about hell; that people might get some conception of its horrors, and thus flee the wrath to come. In much of current preaching hell is conspicuous only by its absence.

A few years ago I read an article in one of our religious journals on "Hell Fading Out." The writer claimed to be a Christian, but he was rejoicing because hell was fading out of the public mind. He said that "Most Calvinistic preachers will not now preach the old-time terrible views of eternal punishment, and if they did the people would not hear them." He went on to say, "Hell is not so hot a place now as it was when we were boys." Now if hell has cooled off any since Jonathan Edwards preached that memorable sermon of his, "The Sinner in the Hands of an Angry God," when men seized the pews in front of them to keep from slipping into hell, and when they imagined they could hear the souls of the damned writhing in the flames of hell, we have had no information to that effect. I grant you that the preaching on hell may have cooled down considerably since then, but if hell has cooled down any we have not been so informed. A good many other things fade out of the public mind just in proportion as the old doctrine of eternal punishment fades out. No man can love God more than he hates the devil, and no man can desire to gain heaven more than he desires to shun hell, for one is the antithesis of the other. We could not have a heaven without a hell; we might have a hell without a heaven. If all the wicked—those who love sin and hate God—could be turned into heaven, heaven itself would be a veritable hell. Yes, when we quit preaching hell we

would just as well quit preaching heaven—the Book teaches both.

I. There Is a Hell

Whenever you prove that there is a man in the penitentiary at Frankfort you prove that there is a penitentiary in Frankfort, for you could not have a man in the penitentiary in Frankfort if there were no penitentiary in Frankfort. Whenever you prove that there is a man in hell you prove that there is a hell. There could not be a man in hell if there were no hell. Jesus says this rich man "lifted up his eyes in hell, being in torment." If there is one man in hell then there is a hell, and Jesus says this man is in hell. Some seem to think that because they do not believe in a hell, for them at least, there is no hell. Your failing to believe a fact does not change the fact. You may not believe in the effects of strychnine, but you take a dose tonight and tomorrow morning you will not believe anything. The fact that some believe there is no hell is all the greater reason why we should preach the doctrine of hell.

1. *Hell is a place.* I do not know why some people have undertaken to convince themselves and others that hell is not a place, unless it is to get rid of a personal devil. Of course, if hell is not a place the devil is not a person. If the devil is a person, he is in a place. But what have they gained when they admit that hell is a state or condition, and the devil an evil influence? If they have a state, or condition, as bad as hell, and an evil influence as wicked as the devil, and one which does the work of a devil and a work which no one but a devil would do, what have they gained? I think I would just as soon be in a hell of place as in a hell of condition; and I would rather combat a devil of person than a devil of influence. Every

principle and argument that will prove that hell is not a place will prove that heaven is not a place. But some one replies that Jesus went to prepare us a PLACE. Yes, and Judas went to hell, as I will show later on, and the Bible says "Judas went to his own PLACE." The Bible teaches just as positively that hell is a place as it teaches that heaven is a place, and the argument that will do away with one will do away with the other.

2. *Hell is a place of suffering.* It would not be so bad to think of hell as a place if we could think of it apart from suffering. But the only message we have which has come from that place is this one telling of its awful suffering—"I am tormented in this flame." But some one says, "I thought educated preachers had quit preaching hell-fire and brimstone." Well, may be they have, but the Bible has not quit teaching it. It is not a question of what I believe, or what you believe, but what God teaches. And why theorize and split hairs on whether it is real fire or figurative? If this is a figure of speech, and it takes this figure to give us a just conception of the horrors of hell, then what may the realities be? Then again, if the one who is in hell can not tell whether it is real fire or not, what difference does it make? The rich man thought he was in the fire. He said, "I am tormented in this flame." Yes, hell is a place of suffering, and no man knows the depths of its agony or the blackness of its despair until he lifts up his eyes and sees through the flames of torment as did this man.

3. *Hell is a place of eternal suffering.* Oh, it would not be so bad to think of hell as a place of suffering if we only had some assurance that this suffering would come to an end some time. The doctrine of purgatory is the doctrine of Rome and not the doctrine of the Bible. We are told that there is a "great gulf fixed"—not tem-

porary, but a fixture—so that no one can pass from us to you, neither can any one pass from you to us. That settles the doctrine of purgatory.

No man can believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and the Bible as the word of God and not believe in an eternal hell, for Jesus is the very one who taught the doctrine. In speaking of the Gehenna of fire where the wicked are cast, he says "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." It does not say where *the* worm, but where *their* worm. It is the personal pronoun —"*their* worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." What did Jesus mean to teach there if he did not mean that the living principle, or personality, could not die and that the fire, or that which caused the suffering, could not cease? Every argument that will prove that the punishment of the wicked will come to an end, will prove at the same time that the joys of the righteous will come to an end, for the very same words that are used to describe the duration of heaven are used to describe the duration of hell, and they cannot mean one thing when used in connection with heaven and something else when used in connection with hell. "Eternal life," "eternal punishment"—"everlasting life," "everlasting punishment"—"where the smoke of their torment ascendeth upward forever and ever, and they have no rest day nor night," "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels." That's what the Book says. Do you believe the Book?

Some years ago when a young man I was in the drug business at Martin, Tennessee. I owned my home there. One night wife and I were sitting in front of a good coal-fire; all at once a little mouse started across the hearth, but got frightened and ran under the grate right

into a bed of live coals. The little thing rolled over writhing in the fire. Mrs. Nowlin turned sick and ran out of the room. I got the shovel and covered it up and got it out of sight as soon as possible. Now that was my home, but if that little mouse could not have died and the fire could not have gone out, I would have moved away and left it. I could not have lived there, neither could you, with that little thing writhing and squirming in agony; always dying, and yet never dead. Now that is exactly what Jesus teaches when he says, "their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched." Just as heaven knows no end, hell knows no end. It is one eternal forever and ever.

II. Men Go to Hell

1. The rich man went to hell. *Men go to hell, however undesirable this may be.* Here is a man in hell, for Jesus says so. This destroys forever the doctrine of universal salvation. You only have to prove that one man is lost to destroy the doctrine of universal salvation. Jesus says this man is in hell. Some of their scholarly critics, however, might reply that the Greek word here translated "hell" is not the Greek word which means the place of eternal burning. Ah, whenever they say that they then and there admit that there is such a word. Now the word translated here "hell" is not Gehenna, which means the place of eternal burning, but Hades. But in all the other Scriptures I read the word translated "hell" is Gehenna. It is true that Hades does not necessarily mean the place of eternal punishment. It is a general term for the unseen world, or place of departed spirits. But, my friends, we are not dependent upon the meaning of a Greek word to find out what part of Hades this man is in, for the very next clause says, "being in torment."

This tells us what part of Hades he was in. Jesus said he was in torment, Abraham said he was in torment, and the rich man himself said he was in torment. There are three witnesses all saying he was in torment; and the Book says, "In the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established." Calling it Hades does not change the torment. You might call it heaven, and the man would be in torment just the same. Changing the name does not change the fact. A man in the penitentiary might call it the king's palace, but he is in prison, nevertheless. The rich man is in hell—in torment.

I wish I could draw the curtain here and say that no other man has, or ever will, go to hell, but I cannot. There is at least one other man in hell.

2. *Judas went to hell.* The Scriptures teach us that the man who betrays the Son of God would have been better off if he had never been born. Judas did not go to heaven when he died, for it could not be said of one who is safe in heaven, "Better for him if he had never been born." Neither could he have been annihilated at death, for if he had been annihilated he would have been in exactly the same condition he would have been in if never born—neither better nor worse. The only existence after death worse than non-existence is an existence of suffering, so if Judas is in a state of existence after death worse than non-existence he is in hell. Then the Scriptures tell us that Judas was a son of perdition and went to his own place. So you see there are two men in hell. This thought is terrible enough, but I cannot draw the curtain here and say that is the end of it; I wish I could.

3. *Many go to hell.* The saddest thought of all is the statement of Jesus that the way to perdition is broad and "many go in thereat." He says few saved, many

lost. People in this country have a notion that nearly everybody is going to be saved; that the old drunken sot or murderer or gambler will be lost, but that every one who is decent will be saved. You do not have to be wicked to be lost. You are already lost, condemned because you have not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God. It is true that "the wicked will be turned into hell," but it says, "with all the nations that forget God."

Where do you stand tonight? Are you in the broad road with the many, or are you in the strait and narrow road with the few? Yes, it is a staggering thought that many go to hell. The next point I wish to notice is

III. Those in Hell Are Concerned for Those on the Way

Those in hell are concerned about those on the way, because hell to them is a stern reality, not a myth nor a fable. There are no skeptics in hell. Five minutes in hell will make the worst skeptic thoroughly orthodox on hell, and he will not be puzzling his brain about whether it is Hades or Gehenna, either. This rich man remembered his brothers who were on the way to hell, and he knew what they needed—repentance. He said if one should go to them from the dead they would repent. This rich man knew that the trouble with himself was that he had not repented. The message from those in hell to those on the way is that they come not into this place of torment; and the remedy suggested is that they repent.

Christian friends, if the damned in hell are concerned for the salvation of the lost, should we not be desperately concerned for them?

Lost man or woman, if you are so unfortunate as to have friends or loved ones in hell you will do them a

favor by going elsewhere. They do not want you there. Your presence would make their state all the more miserable.

In closing, let me remind you that there are but two places for the departed spirits of men—hell and heaven. Where will you spend eternity? You have the choice tonight between heaven and hell, which will you accept? Salvation is not universal, but the offer of salvation is universal. Choose ye this day whom ye will serve. I set life and death before you. God says, "If you accept life you shall live, but if you accept death you shall die." Do not let the devil deceive you tonight, but open up your heart and let Jesus come in.

IV

CHRIST'S PROMISE TO THE PENITENT THIEF

"Today shalt thou be with me in paradise."—Luke 23 : 43.

Christ at this time was being crucified between two thieves and that, too, while the people were railing at him to save himself and come down from the cross; these two thieves joined with them in their railing, but one of them became penitent and, rebuking his fellow thief, turned to Jesus and said, "Lord, when thou comest into thy kingdom, remember me." Jesus said to him, "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise." There are those who tell us that Christ did not make this man any promise at all, and that there should be an interrogation-point after this sentence. "It does not say, 'Thou shalt be with me in paradise,' but *shalt thou,* which indicates that it should have a question-mark after it," we are told. Well, if that peculiar phraseology proves that it is a question, then the same phraseology will prove the same thing wherever found in the Bible. It says, "Six days shalt thou labor, etc." Is that a question? There is that same phraseology. "Six days shalt thou labor." It does not say thou shalt, but *shalt thou.* Do you think God was asking a question there? No indeed, that is one of the Ten Commandments. You remember when Paul took an appeal to Cæsar, the question was asked, "Hast thou appealed unto Cæsar? Unto Cæsar shalt thou go." Do you think that was a question? No, sir, that was the decree of the court. You find a good many other places in the Bible where this same phraseology occurs and

where you cannot use a question-mark after it either. The trouble about fixing the Scripture to suit your notion is you get one fixed, but somewhere else you will strike a snag. The best way to get along with the Bible is to let God say what he wants to say and mean what he wants to mean.

Others tell us Jesus did make this man a promise, but that he simply meant to say, "Today shalt thou be with me in the grave." Now that is very unlike Jesus. There are cases where Jesus refused to answer people altogether, but in every case it was where they were trying to entrap him. In every case where they came for help, Jesus always answered. Jesus certainly would not have told this thief he would soon be with him in the grave, because the man himself knew his body would soon be put in the grave. Then, if Jesus had wanted to say to this man, "You will soon be dead and in the grave," why did he not say so? Jesus knew how to use language. There was a word which meant grave; why did he not use it? Then there are those who say, "Yes, Jesus made him a promise, but then Jesus was here in person and could save any way he wanted to, but when Jesus left this earth he left a plan of salvation by which people must be saved." This simply means that this man was saved by a different plan of salvation from others. If God has ever changed or exchanged his plan of salvation, it was either for a better or for a worse plan. If it was for a better, then the first plan was imperfect; if for a worse, then the latter is imperfect. But God has never changed his plan of salvation. He saves men today just as he saved Father Abraham—by faith. Those who were saved before Christ came, looked forward to his coming just as we look back to the Lamb that was slain. Christ made that man a promise that day. What was it? It

all depends upon the meaning of the word "paradise." This word *paradise* occurs only three times in the New Testament, in Luke 23 : 43, in Second Corinthians 12 : 4, and in Revelation 2 : 7, which we shall notice later.

I shall discuss two general points tonight. First, what is paradise, and secondly, the terms on which this man entered into paradise.

I. What is Paradise?

Let the Bible answer. One of the best ways to interpret the Scriptures, when you have no commentaries to help you, is to take the Bible and let it interpret itself. See how the apostles used the same word somewhere else. There is nothing in the context of this text to indicate the meaning of the word *paradise*. Suppose we turn over to Second Corinthians 12 : 4. Paul was telling about an experience. He says: "I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell; God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body or out of the body, I cannot tell, God knoweth:) How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter." Paul was too modest to say he had this experience, but he was the one caught up into the third heaven, into paradise; whether in the body or out of the body he could not tell. Paul repeats this statement, and the next time he uses the word "paradise" instead of the "third heaven." Then "paradise" and the "third heaven" are one and the same. Paul says he was caught up into the third heaven, into paradise, which shows that they were the same. Now, if we can find out what the third heaven is, we can find out what paradise is, for they are the same. The Jews spoke of three

heavens. The first is the space above us where the birds fly. Beyond this is the "second heaven" where the stars are, and beyond the place of the planets is the "third heaven," where God is and where God's throne is. Paul meant by the "third heaven" what the Jews usually meant by that expression. So Paul meant by the "third heaven" the place where God is and where God's throne is, and God's throne is in heaven.

Let us see, What did John mean by paradise? "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; to him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God" (Rev. 2 : 7). If we can locate the tree of life, we can locate paradise. "And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life" (Rev. 22 : 1, 2). Then the paradise of God is somewhere around this tree of life, for it is in the midst of paradise. This tree of life is growing in the midst of the paradise of God, then the paradise of God is somewhere around the River of Life, around the throne of God; and God's throne is in heaven. Notice here that John says, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." Who are they that overcome? Those who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Then the blood-washed throngs are in the paradise of God. If I get to where God is and where the Lamb is, and where the tree of life is, and where the blood-washed throngs are singing hallelujahs to the Lamb, that will be heaven enough for me. Again, if we can find out where Jesus went that day, we can find out where the thief went, for Jesus said, "Today

shalt thou be with me in paradise." Just after Jesus made this promise to the thief, he cried with a loud voice and said, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." If he went to the Father that day, the thief went too, because Jesus said, "Today shalt thou be with me." But somebody might say, "Don't you remember the Scripture where Peter says Jesus went into hell and preached to the spirits in prison between the death and the resurrection of the body?" No, I do not remember any such Scripture. That Scripture does not teach that Jesus went into hell and preached to those there. Peter was talking about the crucifixion. (1 Peter 3 : 18-20.) He says Christ was put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the Spirit; in which (Spirit) he went and preached unto the spirits (NOW) in prison. The Spirit which was liberated when Jesus was put to death was the same Spirit which went in the days of Noah and preached through Noah to the spirits who are now in prison; who were disobedient in the long-suffering of God while the ark was being prepared. The Bible says, "After death, the judgment," not "After death, another probation." If Jesus went to the Father that day, the thief went to the Father that day. But he said to Mary, "Touch me not, for I have not yet ascended to the Father." That was the body they wanted to touch. The body had not ascended, but the Spirit went to the Father. There is no Scripture that justifies the statement that Jesus Christ went into hell between the death and the resurrection of the body and preached to those in hell. He went to the Father that day in spirit (not his body); his body went to the grave, and the body of this thief went to the grave, I suppose. What Jesus promised that man was that he should be with him where God is, where God's throne is, and where the River of Life is flowing, and where the

blood-washed throngs are singing the songs of redemption.

II. The Terms on Which This Man Entered Into Paradise

What were the terms upon which this man entered into paradise? There were two thieves, one on His right and one on his left. I suppose one was just as wicked as the other, for both railed on Christ. But only one of them was saved, so far as the record shows. What were the terms on which this man was saved? I will notice first what were not the terms. I shall treat the subject by the process of elimination. If you know a thing is one of three things, and you prove that it is not the first, and not the second, then it is bound to be the third. Sometimes elimination is the only way you can prove what a thing is. And sometimes, when you cannot prove what a thing is by elimination, you can at least clear away a good deal of rubbish so that you can prove what it is. What were the terms on which this man was saved? It was not church-membership. You ask some people, "Are you saved?" and they will say, "I am a member of the church." "But are you a Christian?" "I have been a member of the church for ten years," is the reply. They seem to think because they are members of a church, and their names on the roll, they are saved. Suppose the church record should get burned. Then, suppose some of you Baptists should let the rats eat your church letters up, what about it? I fear at the judgment-bar of God there will be many people turned away who had their names on church-rolls here on earth. You had better examine the grounds of your hope if your only evidence of salvation is church-membership. This man had never had an opportunity to become a church-mem-

ber perhaps, and if he had ever been a church-member, he had forfeited all rights to church-membership by an ungodly life.

It was not baptism. We believe every child of God ought to be baptized. I do not believe any well-informed Christian will refuse to be baptized, and for a man to know it is his duty to be baptized and then refuse to be, would show at once that he was not a proper subject for baptism. This thief had no opportunity to be baptized; and if he had been baptized, baptism does not save. If baptism fails to save in one case, it will fail in every case. Baptism failed to save Simon Magus, for the apostle said, "Thy gold perish with thee." He was in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity, and yet he had been baptized. Every one who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour and confesses him as his Lord, should be baptized. We are commanded to make disciples and baptize them.

It was not the observance of the Mosaic law that saved this man. He admitted that he was a highway robber; he had violated the law, and was under the penalty of the law. Whenever a man violates a law in one particular, the whole law is broken. If one link of a chain is broken, the whole chain is broken.

It was not morality that saved this man. He was not moral. And then, morality is no better for salvation than immorality, because every one has committed at least one sin, and condemnation is not in the degree or number of sins, but in the fact of sin. All have sinned, and therefore all are dead in trespasses and in sin and condemnation has passed upon all.

It was not the interposition of a priest that saved him. No priest came between the Saviour and the thief to absolve him from sin. If one man can come to the Lord

without a priest, preacher, or pope, then every man can do the same thing.

If it was not church-membership, nor baptism, nor the observance of the law, nor morality, nor the interposition of a priest that saved him, then what was it? In the first place, this man called upon the name of the Lord. The Book says, "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." This man did call upon the name of the Lord and therefore was saved. This man repented of his sins. How do we know? The Book says, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." This man did not perish, therefore he repented. He could not do penance, but he could repent, though nailed to a cross. This man believed on the Lord. How do we know? Because the Book says, "He that believeth not shall be damned." He was not damned, therefore he believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. He completed the act of faith while on the cross and had the assurance that he would be with Jesus in paradise. This is one case of death-bed repentance, but this is no warrant to any man to put off his salvation to a dying hour.

Your case is very different from this man's. This was the first opportunity he had ever had. Maybe you will not die as he did. The death of the cross is a slow process. Death may come like a flash to you. You may not have time to repent. Then, I have not much confidence in death-bed repentance. Usually there is nothing in it, if the man gets well. A great preacher has said that only two cases out of a hundred of supposed death-bed repentances ever amounted to anything where they got well. I have never known of a single case. I asked Dr. J. M. Weaver if he had ever known of a man who was converted on what he thought was his death-bed, and got well, who proved to be genuinely converted? He said,

"Yes, just one." While pastor in Lexington, Dr. C. M. Thompson was with me in a meeting. One night Mrs. Nowlin said to me after we came home from meeting: "There is a note for you in there. A man is dying on High Street and wants you to come at once." I said to Doctor Thompson, "You go to bed, and I'll go to see the dying man." I went and found the man in what was supposed to be the last stage of consumption. The doctors told him he could not live many hours. He said to me, "I want to join the church before I die." I said, "Taking you into the church cannot save you." I said, "Do you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ with all your heart—do you love him?" He said, "Oh, yes, and if God would just give me a chance, I would gladly obey him." I read him the Scriptures and told him if he was really trusting the Lord Jesus Christ, he was saved, because he said, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." I said, "I will pray for you that you may get up and go to church and be received for membership." He said, "I cannot live to do that." I was impressed that he would get up, and I prayed God that he would let him get up. He said, "If God just gives me the strength I will be glad to go to church and be received." The next morning I found him a little better, and Brother Thompson, who was with me, told him just what I had told him. We asked God to raise him up so that he could prove that he meant what he said. He got up and got well. But he did not come to the church at all. I stayed there a number of years after this and used to see that man on the streets, but he never came to the church. Oh, he was penitent that night, when he thought he would never see another day. He was simply hell-scared, that was all.

Those who have opportunities in this life and refuse to accept them, I do not believe are in shape to be saved

when they are dying. There may be a few, but a very few, who are thus saved. Salvation is offered to every man without money and without price. "Him that cometh unto me I will in nowise cast out." If you love Jesus, prove it by obeying him. Jesus says, "He that keepeth not my words, loveth me not." I trust that there are some here who have the courage to do their duty this night.

V

AN UNANSWERED QUESTION IN PROFIT AND LOSS

"What shall it profit a man though he should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"—Matthew 16 : 26.

Jesus presents in this text an unanswerable argument for the worth of the immortal part of man. This question was asked nearly two thousand years ago, and was asked by one who could weigh with accuracy the soul of man. Many things have been weighed in the balances over against the soul—money, social position, pleasure, political power, etc. Money is entitled to the first place, perhaps, because it tempts more people and is often used to procure the others. People often buy political power, earthly pleasures, and positions of honor, but they cannot buy real happiness; they cannot buy salvation; they cannot buy heaven. The American people are a great people for profit and loss, especially for profit. This is all right to a certain extent. We should not go into a thing without considering its worth and its cost. When certain people wanted to follow Jesus he said to them, "You had better count the cost," reminding them that he was poorer than the birds of the air, or the foxes of the hills. These had places of habitation, but he had not where to lay his head.

While we are considering the question of profit and loss we should consider our greatest possible gain and our greatest possible loss. The greatest possible gain to any

man is the gain of eternal life, and the greatest possible loss is the loss of one's soul. Jesus is not saying that it is possible for any one man to gain the whole world, but is reasoning from the premise, "If a man should gain the whole world and lose his own soul," he has lost immeasurably and irreparably. This statement clearly implies

I. Every Man Has a Soul

Jesus' question proves this. Jesus would not have been guilty of discussing the possibility of a man losing his soul if men had no souls. In this case the disciples, no doubt, would have replied: "Why, Master, what are you talking about? Don't you know men have no souls?" Jesus did not stop to argue the fact that men have souls; it was not necessary. So this very question proves that men have souls. The question was based upon that fact. Not only do the words of Jesus prove that men have souls, but our intuitions prove the same. There is a universal belief in man that there is something in him that does not die with the body. This is not only true of people who have the Bible, but it is true of people who are in heathen darkness. The claim is made that no infidel, no atheist, has ever been found among heathen people. They all believe that they have a principle, or something, in them that does not die with the body. That is the reason why the Indian had his dog and his pony, his bow and arrow, buried with him. He wanted to have these with him in the Happy Hunting-ground on the other side. Our experiences prove the same thing. There is not one here who has not had at some time a warfare going on in his being. You had the opportunity to do a thing, had the desire, or passion to do it,

and yet did not do it. Why? Because there was something that said it is not right. You cannot have an antagonism without at least two antagonistic elements. You might pile up soda until it is mountain high, and there would be no disturbance; and you might have a great lake of acid alone and it would create no disturbance; but when they come together a disturbance is created, because they are antagonistic. One nature could not antagonize itself. So if man has a warfare going on in him, he must have two antagonistic natures.

I was holding a meeting in a certain village where the pastor told me of a man in the community who was an infidel, and so we went to see him out in the field. I began to talk with him. The old man gave me to understand at once that he did not believe he had any soul. I said to him, "Have you ever at any time in your life had a warfare going on in your being?" He said, "What does that mean anyhow?" He had had that experience. I said: "That means you have two natures, the lower and the higher nature. The lower nature has appetites and passions, and some of them not legitimate, and the higher nature is that which says, 'That is wrong.'" The old man began to ask questions at once about these experiences. Man is the only animal living that has a passion to do a certain thing, and has the opportunity to do it, and yet does not do it. A hog has an appetite for buttermilk, and when he has the opportunity he dives into it. He does not ask whose buttermilk it is or whether it is right or wrong, he dives in. Every man has had at times a desire, or passion, to do a certain thing, but has not done it because there was another nature in him which said, "It is not right." Some years ago

while Doctor Henson was pastor of the First Church in Chicago, he was making a fight for prohibition. There was a young editor of a daily paper in Chicago who made an attack on Doctor Henson's lecture. He said: "I do not need prohibition to keep me from drinking. I am a man. I'll drink when I want to, and will let it alone when I don't want it." Doctor Henson replied: "That is no man at all, to drink when you want it and let it alone when you don't want it. An ox will drink when he wants to, and he would be a fool to drink when he didn't want to. It takes a man to want to and not do it." The experience of every man proves that he has in him two natures. Did you ever think about it? To doubt that you have a soul is proof that you have it, since to doubt whether or not one has a soul is possible only of a being that has a soul. A being that has no soul cannot reason on so sublime a subject. If a hog could sit down and reason on the immortality of the soul, and even doubt whether or not it has a soul, I'd believe it had a soul. Then to doubt that you have a soul is proof that you have it. The soul really is the man. It is more accurate to say the man has a body, since the soul is really the man.

II. Every Man May Lose His Soul

To be lost is one of the inherent possibilities of the soul. If it had not been possible for a man to lose his soul, the disciples no doubt would have said, "What do you mean, Master, by talking about the possibility of an impossibility?" But to be lost is one of the inherent possibilities of the soul. The words of Jesus prove this. Our own experiences prove this. Perhaps every normal man has realized at some time that he was lost. Paul in his address on Mars Hill tells us that these people were

" feeling after God " in the darkness. They realized that they were alienated from God. The heathen realize that they are lost; their sacrifices, their offerings are strong arguments that they are feeling their way toward God. They are alienated from God; but are trying to find their way back to him. Now wherever you find a universal belief in a thing, or a universal demand for a thing, that thing must exist. Nature has no half hinges. The universal demand has its complement somewhere. The eye is an argument in favor of light. The eye is made to receive light and is proof of the existence of light somewhere. If you had never heard a sound, but by examining an ear you found that it was made to receive sound, you would say, " That is an argument in favor of sound." The birds in their wild state in the northern clime have an instinct that somewhere in the South there is a warmer place. They rise up and go South and find the complement to that instinct. In the springtime they go North by instinct; they find an answer to that instinct in them. There is a universal belief in man that there is something in him that does not die with the body; then such a belief has its complement in fact. No tribe has ever been found so low that they did not believe there was something in them that did not die with the body. The universal demand for life hereafter is in favor of the immortality of the soul. I can prove to the atheistic evolutionist from his own premise that there is an immortal soul in man.

According to the Darwinian theory, man has come up from the lowest form of life to the manlike ape, and then this manlike ape desired hands, and so he finally began to walk on two feet, and the other two were used for hands, so the very desire and need for hands produced them. The evolutionist tells us that the glowworm did not have eyes at first but by and by the need for eyes

developed them; those little spots on the side developed into eyes. We are told that man had no use for a tail, and so the monkey finally shed his tail and thus became a man. However, the absence of a tail does not always make a man.

I can take the evolutionist's theory and make him admit, if his mind is hooked up logically, that there must be souls and that they must live forever. The theory of natural selection and the universal belief in immortality and the desire to live forever, if men had not had souls, would have produced them, if the evolutionist is correct. I do not accept his premise, of course.

But we have the word of Jesus to the effect that men have souls and that men's souls may be lost. Our experiences tell us that we are lost and our knowledge of heathen nations proves the same fact.

III. Every Lost Soul is of the Sinner's Own Losing

You notice that Jesus says, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" He does not say, "If God damns his soul." Men damn their own souls if they are damned. Losing his soul is man's own act, and not the act of God. Our experiences prove this. We know we are responsible for it if we are lost. Lost men in perdition are going to say: "We are responsible and God is just and holy. God is not responsible for our being lost. God has not done it, we have done it ourselves." The confessions of those in hell prove that every lost soul is of the sinner's own losing. That rich man did not bring any railing accusation against God for his being in hell. He knew he had done it himself, and so wanted to send back word to his brothers not to come there, as they would be responsible and not God. He did not say, "Send Lazarus to appeal to God," but he said,

"Send him to tell my brothers not to come to this place of torment." It is the height of folly for man to complain at God because men are lost when God has done everything he could justly do to keep men from going to hell. Men can bring no just charge against God for their being in hell. They will admit that God's dealings are just and that they deserve the treatment meted out to them. Yea, they will say, "I did it myself, I would have it so."

IV. One Soul is Worth More Than the Whole World

"What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" The argument is that if one man had the whole world it would not be worth as much as his soul, and that he would gladly exchange the world for his soul, if he could only make the exchange. If one man had all of Logan County he would be a rich man. But Jesus did not stop with Logan County, nor with Kentucky, nor the United States, but the whole world. Now if one man had the whole world he would gladly give it in exchange for his soul, especially on the last day of his life. Jesus means to say that the soul is worth more than the whole world. First, because it cost more than the whole world. Did you ever think of the fact that the redemption of a soul cost more than the whole world? It cost God the death of his Son to save a soul. The price of man's redemption is the crimson tide which flowed from his side on Calvary's rugged brow. Blood redemption. That's the price.

Many years ago when the great bridge which spans the Mississippi was being built, I saw it, and a man was telling me how much it had cost, and how many people had lost their lives in the construction of it, and how we could only estimate the worth of the bridge by the cost of it.

That is the way we usually estimate values. But the value of a soul is really staggering when we come to think of it in the light of its cost. The death of his Son on the cross was the price of man's redemption. Sometimes people have trouble in trying to grasp the fact that Jesus paid the price for an indefinite number of individuals. You remember some years ago when we had so much said about "16 to 1"? What did that mean? That meant that one ounce of gold was equal to sixteen ounces of silver. Because the gold had in it the intrinsic worth, one ounce of gold would pay for sixteen ounces of silver. Jesus Christ was not only man but was God. He was an infinite being and could pay the price of an indefinite number of finite beings, because he was worth an infinite number of finite beings. One God could suffer as much as all men. I think you can grasp that. That was the price paid for man's redemption. In the second place, the soul will last longer than the world. It is valuable because of its durability. The immortal part of man is worth more than the world because it will outlast the world. After this world has been destroyed with a fervent heat, and the sun has refused to shine and shut his glories in, and the heavens shall have cast the stars down as the fig tree casts its untimely figs in the time of storm, yea, after the wreck and decay of time, the soul will go marching on. The world is not worth much when you come to die. When the rich come to die they are just as poor as anybody. A millionaire is just as poor as the poorest pauper in the community when breath is gone. Treasures here do not amount to anything then. We are told that Queen Elizabeth said when she came to die, "Millions of money for an inch of time." She had the money but could not buy a moment of time. The time was up, and it may soon be up with you, my friend. The

most important thing in this life is to prepare for the life to come. This is only a dressing-room where we may get ready for eternity. Why should we not take more time to get ready for the next world? These souls of ours are worth more than all the world with its pleasures and honors. These sink into insignificance in comparison with the soul of man. The time to decide is now, it may be too late when you come to die. I beseech you, my friends, to be reconciled to God, and do it now. *How* are you going to spend this life and *where* are you going to spend eternity?

VI

DOES RELIGION PAY?

"For their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges."—Deuteronomy 32 : 31.

If religion does not pay no one should invest in it. If it does pay, then every one should invest in it. The American people are great for profit and loss, and oh, if they would only consider their greatest possible profit and their greatest possible loss. It is sometimes wise to answer a fool according to his folly; and I do this at times. If a man tells me he is an agnostic, and I find that he is a blatant blatherskite, wanting an argument, I agree with him at once. I tell him the preponderance of evidence is on his side of the question and that I am not disposed to dispute his claim; but if he turns to me and says that I know nothing, I tell him that is a different proposition altogether. If you know what I don't know, you know a good deal, for what I don't know would furnish a fine field for research. A man who affirms that he knows nothing affirms that he knows something; he affirms that he knows that he knows nothing, and that is more than some people know. If a man comes to me and tells me that he is an evolutionist and that his great-grandfather was a monkey, I do not dispute with him about it, because in the first place a man is supposed to know more about his ancestry than other people are supposed to know, and because, in the second place, we judge of a man's ancestry largely by the peculiarities of

the offspring, and I must confess that you have many striking resemblances of your great-grandfather. If he says that my great-grandfather was a monkey I tell him that is another proposition. My great-grandfather was a Baptist minister in Virginia more than a hundred years ago. My grandfather was a Baptist minister in Tennessee more than fifty years ago. I can trace my ancestry back to the Emerald Isle, and I find no monkeys along the line. In fact, I did not come by the monkey line. I started in the Garden of Eden, and not in a zoological garden. If a man tells me he is an atheist and that there is no God, I usually puncture his balloon at once by asking him a few questions. I ask: "How do you know there is no God? Do you know everything that exists in all space everywhere?" He usually says, "No." As long as you admit that you do not know everything that exists everywhere, you cannot know that there is no God, for the very thing you do not know may be God, and God may be in that place of which you do not know. No man that does not know everything that exists everywhere can know that there is no God. If a man tells me that the Bible is full of mistakes I have him point out one of the mistakes; for it proves to be his mistake and not Moses'. Ingersoll used to lecture on "The Mistakes of Moses," at one dollar per head. I never cared to pay the price, but I would give fifty dollars to hear Moses on the mistakes of Bob. I imagine it would be worth the price if Moses would only condescend to notice Bob. While I think it is often wise to answer a fool according to his folly, I will go as far as anybody to show an honest skeptic his folly, and the real worth of the Christian religion. An honest skeptic does not boast about his skepticism. He would give his right arm for the faith he once had when he prayed at his mother's

knee. The blatant blatherskite that goes around bragging about his skepticism is usually an ignoramus showing that he knows very little. Now if there is one here tonight who doubts the wisdom of accepting and practising the principles of the Christian religion, I want to show you that religion pays.

I. The Testimony of the World is in Favor of the Worth of the Christian Religion

I mean by the world those who are not Christians. Of course all Christians would testify that religion pays. I am going to put worldlians on the witness-stand to show that their foundation is not as our foundation, they being the witnesses in the case.

We are told that the great National Bank of England has a list of twenty questions to be answered by every applicant for a position in that bank, and that the first question is, "How do you spend your Sabbaths?" If the answer is "In religious worship," they ask the next question, but if the applicant does not attend religious worship on the Sabbath Day, they do not ask another question. The National Bank of England is not run in the interest of religion, but finance. The railroads have discovered that it pays to have their employees under the influence of the Christian religion. The Railroad Y. M. C. A. is being established everywhere over the country. I used to preach in one of the centers on Friday nights and Sunday afternoons in Lexington, Kentucky. They did not have their services at the same time as ours. Brother D. D. Taylor was the Secretary of the Railroad Y. M. C. A. in Lexington. The Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad had a Y. M. C. A. at every division point from Louisville to Old Point Comfort. You might ask, "Who pays you your salary, Brother

Taylor?" The reply is, "The railroad company pays my salary every month." "Why do they pay you a salary and keep you here?" "Because to keep this place open and furnish religious books and papers and to have somebody instruct the men in religious matters pays the railroad in dollars and cents by keeping their men from the saloons and gambling-dens." I am glad the railroads keep their men away from the saloons and gambling-dens. I don't want any drunken conductor or engineer pulling the train I am riding on. In a railroad Y. M. C. A. meeting some time ago the president told how they spent thousands of dollars every year for Y. M. C. A. work, but he said, "Gentlemen, we could spend ten times that much and still make money by it." Now you wonder how. Whenever a drunken conductor misreads his orders and has a collision, kills a few people and destroys two trains, it costs an enormous sum. That wreck at Shepherdsville, Kentucky, some time ago in which fifty people were killed, cost the Louisville and Nashville up into the millions. That means something. But by having men who are under the influence of the Christian religion, sober and steady, they have fewer accidents, and this reduces the cost of wreckage.

Some years ago I had a brother pastor with me in a meeting in Lexington, Kentucky, and while there he said while he was at Newcastle, Kentucky, in a meeting, he stopped in the home of an infidel lawyer whose wife was a good Baptist. He said this lawyer treated him with all courtesy in the home, but one day while at the table the lawyer said: "You ought to have been with us, doctor, a while back when we were taking an outing on a fishing and hunting trip. We told the conductor where we wanted to get off up in the mountains, so he stopped his train saying, 'This is the place where you gentlemen

want to get off.' We had too much luggage and money, but we had to take care of it. It was about night and the question was, 'Where will we spend the night?' We went up to a cabin and hollered, 'Hello,' country fashion. An old man came out, and we told what we wanted, but he said, 'Gentlemen, we are not fixed to take care of city folks.' We said, 'That is all right, no matter how you are fixed, we want to stay all night with you.' He said, 'I never turned a man from my door, and I am getting too old to begin now, so if you want to stay, come in.'" Those mountaineers may be ignorant, but they are big-hearted and generous; they will divide the last thing they have with you and invite you to share the best they have. The man said: "We went in to spend the night with the old man. The old man and his wife lived alone. When time to retire came, the old man went up a ladder into the loft and fixed the bed, and said, 'Men, your beds are ready, climb up that ladder and go to bed.' After we retired we heard the old man reading his Bible. He was too timid to have his family worship in the presence of the strangers and so waited until we got to bed. He then tried to read his Bible but just stumbled over it, then he and his wife got down on their knees together to pray. We heard every word the old man said as he prayed. He asked the Lord to keep and protect the strangers under his roof; forbid that any harm should befall them; that their families be protected, and that they be allowed to return to their homes safe and sound. The next morning I said: 'Let's leave our baggage with this old man; I am not afraid to trust him with my pocket-book.'" The doctor said to him, "You have given me an argument against your infidelity." The reply was, "I didn't believe in his God, but I knew he believed in God, and I knew he could not ask him to

protect the strangers under his roof, and then harm them himself." I wonder if this man had learned, before retiring that night, that the old man was an infidel, he would have said, "Let's leave everything with him." No, gentlemen, he would have said: "Get up everything and git. I would not trust him with a tooth-pick." For he had sense enough to know that the man who believes he will die like a hog, will live like a hog. Don't you think the infidel, before asking the Christian to give up his Christianity and accept his infidelity, should produce at least one man who was a Christian and who lived up to the principles of the Christian religion and thereby was a bad man, but by giving up Christianity and accepting infidelity thereby became a good man? I think so. I can produce my man. When I was pastor at Hickman, Kentucky, I had a deacon, Brother E. Case, eighty years old, who was an infidel until he was forty years old. He said that during his infidelity he had committed every crime known to man, except that of gambling, and during that time he was in good standing and in full fellowship with his infidel brethren. Thomas J. Fisher, a noted evangelist of his day, held several meetings in Hickman, and this man was converted. He had been very profane and that troubled him; he was afraid he would swear after he was converted, so he said to his wife, who was a good Christian woman, "You pray for me and ask God to give me grace, and I promise God to do my dead level best not to be guilty of swearing." They prayed together, and it was said that he never was known to swear after that time. He became a very godly man, reared and educated fourteen orphan children, and left a fund for the Odd Fellows' Home. He was wicked and guilty of almost every crime while an infidel, but by giving up infidelity and accepting Christianity he became one of the

most godly men in all that country. Now don't you think the infidel should produce at least one case like that before asking the Christian to quit Christianity and take up infidelity? I pledge you my word and honor before God and this congregation that if a single case of that kind can be produced I will give up Christianity and accept infidelity. But ah, don't think such a thing will ever come to pass until the last man of Adam's race shall have shuffled off this mortal coil and taken on a spiritualized body. It cannot happen. A man cannot live up to the principles of the Christian religion and be a bad man, for they require him to be good, clean, and honest.

Another witness I want to introduce is in "Uncle Tom's Cabin," written by Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe. The book is fiction and is overdrawn, as is all fiction. Tom Dixon's "Leopard Spots" is also overdrawn in the other direction. It is not true to the general conditions that existed throughout the South during the reconstruction period. Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe's book is not true to the general conditions of the time. It, no doubt, represented some isolated cases. But there is a mighty truth contained in the book. You remember how she represents the slave-dealer, Mr. Hailey, in the discussion with Mr. Shelby, the owner of Uncle Tom. Mr. Shelby put a price on Tom. "That is too much for any nigger," said Mr. Hailey. "But you must remember," said Mr. Shelby, "that Tom is religious." "Oh, I suppose he is religious, as niggers generally go," said Mr. Hailey. "No, he's got religion; I trust him. I sent him some time ago to Cincinnati for some money; some rough fellows got hold of him and tried to induce him to escape to Canada with the money, but he said: 'No, I am a Christian. I promised my master I would return, and I will do it.'" Then Mr. Hailey said: "Religion is a good

thing for a nigger; it makes him sell monstrous well. The last load I carried down the Mississippi River there was one old critter on there—ah, it was like a camp-meeting to hear him sing and pray. I realized six hundred dollars profit on him because he was a Christian." A religious negro would sell for more than one who was not trustworthy. He made a better slave.

Another argument in favor of the Christian religion is the fact that the world expects more of Christians than they expect of others. You let some Christian minister get drunk or commit some crime, and the Associated Press will send it around the world in twenty-four hours. Why? Because it is news; it is the unusual. There are men committing such crimes all the time in large cities, but the newspapers will not condescend to notice them. But if a preacher, or even a prominent church-member, does such a thing, it is published all over the world. This is an unwitting compliment that the world pays the Christian religion. The world always expects more of us than they expect of themselves, and this is an admission that there is a power in our religion to make us better. The saddest thing that could befall the Christian religion would be for the day to come when the world expects no more of us than they expect of themselves.

Having shown that the testimony of the world is in favor of the Christian religion, let us next take into consideration

II. The Character of This Testimony

The character of testimony and the circumstances under which it is given are just as important as the testimony itself. In taking testimony you want to discover, as far as possible, what relation the witness sustains to the case in hand, what might have been

the possible motive, and whether or not the witness receives any compensation for his testimony. These are important facts in testimony. Notice that these witnesses are disinterested witnesses and received no compensation for their testimony. The Bank of England is not a religious institution, but a financial institution. The Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad Company is not running its business in the interest of the Christian religion, but in the interest of finances. That infidel at Newcastle was not intending to pay a compliment to the Christian religion, but he unconsciously paid it a great compliment. Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe did not write "Uncle Tom's Cabin" in the interest of the Christian religion, but in the interest of the abolition of slavery. The testimony in each case was unsought and unwittingly given. So this is the best possible testimony; that of disinterested witnesses, and witnesses who received no compensation for their testimony.

III. The Conclusions from This Testimony

The conclusions are two: First, that *religion is valuable if there be no hereafter.* Suppose we blot out the thought that there is a hereafter, religion pays anyway. Religion makes a man better in every way; makes a woman a better woman, makes boys and girls better boys and girls. Those who live according to the teachings of Christ have better consciences, sleep better, get more out of this life. The religious slave sold for more money than one not religious. There are better positions for Christians than those not Christians. Religion is a good investment here in this life, to say nothing of that which is to come. There is nothing in the Christian religion that disqualifies a man for the greatest joy and the largest usefulness in this life.

But secondly, in view of the fact that there is a hereafter, the Christian religion is invaluable. You cannot estimate the value of the Christian religion in view of both time and eternity. It is related of Bob Ingersoll that he met a little girl, a neighbor of his, one morning as she was going to Sunday school. He said to her, "You are going to Sunday school?" She said, "Yes, sir." "You believe in Sunday school, do you?" "Yes, sir," was the reply. "You believe in heaven and hell, then do you?" "Yes, sir," she said, "I believe all of it." He said, "Go ahead, my child, it will not hurt you; it will be all the same with you after this life is over." "But," she said to him, "Mr. Ingersoll, suppose it should turn out that there is a heaven and that there is a hell, won't I be better off for believing these things?" Ah, that's the point. She was right. If there is nothing beyond this life, the Christian is just as well off as the infidel; we are better off in this life and we shall be just as well off if blotted out hereafter. A Christian nonentity is just as good as an infidel nonentity. If the infidel is right, there is nothing to be lost in this life and nothing to be lost after this life by being a Christian; but if the Christian is right, there is much to be gained both here and hereafter. The infidel says, "I have no fear of the future." The Christian says, "I not only have no fear of the future, but I have a hope for the future." A hope is better than simply the absence of fear. Let us say two brothers, John and Joe, have been convicted of robbing the United States Government of a one thousand dollar bill each. They are sentenced to be executed, or return the one thousand dollars each. They are in jail awaiting the day of execution. They say, "We are guilty, but we have squandered the money, and so are

helpless." A friend comes in and says: "I have come to befriend you. I will give you each a one thousand dollar bill and let you return it to the Government and go home to your families, if you will accept it as a gift." Joe says: "You are my best friend. I will accept your offer, and I hope to prove to you some day that I appreciate your kindness." John says: "I will not accept that offer; that is a counterfeit bill." But Joe says: "Well, what if it is, you are none the worse off; it costs you nothing, and there is a chance that it is all right, so why not take it?" He says, "No, it is a counterfeit bill." Joe says, "I am getting some comfort out of mine now." John says: "I am a free-thinker, I am not going to take it; it is counterfeit." Joe says, "John, father tried that bill, and he said it is all right." "Yes," replies John, "father was a good man, but father did not think for himself; he was an old traditionalist, believing what his father taught him." Joe says, "But, John, mother tried that bill, and the last thing that mother said was, 'It is all right.'" "Yes, mother was a good woman, but mother was not a free-thinker; I am." The friend says, "There are a few people who say this bill is counterfeit, but no one who has taken it to the bank and tested it says it is counterfeit, and those who have not tested it are not competent witnesses." John refuses the offer. They are awaiting the day of execution—one in hope and the other in despair. When the day of execution comes Joe walks up and presents his bill, and the judge says, "According to the decree of the court you are a free man." When John is asked what he has to present, he says, "Nothing but to be executed." That is the case of Christianity and infidelity. All to gain and nothing to lose by accepting the gift of eternal life. Some say Christianity is a failure, but in every such case the witness is not compe-

tent, for he has not tested it. No one who has tested the Christian religion to a dying hour has said, "It is a failure," no, not one, but there is a volume of testimonies of dying skeptics who say infidelity is a failure. There is nothing to look forward to in infidelity. Always when a Christian comes to die he looks beyond and says it is bright on the other side. Does religion pay? Ask John Randolph, of Roanoke, and hear him, in the dying hour, saying, "Remorse! remorse! remorse!" Does religion pay? Ask Bob Ingersoll, as he goes out like a flash, and hear him saying, "I am taking a fearful leap in the dark." Does religion pay? Ask the rich man who lifted up his eyes in hell and said, "I had my good things in yonder world, and now I am tormented in these flames." Does religion pay? Ask that beggar in Abraham's bosom and hear him say, "I had a hard time in yonder world, but now I am comforted." Does religion pay? Ask that old mother in Israel who has been bereft of every member of her family and is standing alone like the giant oak stripped of every branch by the cyclone; hear her as she enters the chilly waters of death saying:

'Tis religion that can give
Sweetest pleasures while we live.
'Tis religion must supply
Solid comfort when we die.

If I should ask this congregation tonight if religion pays, you would all stand to a man. Then why not stand tonight for Christ? If some man should come into this town with a good investment and one within your reach, you would get all the stock in it you could afford. An investment in religion is the finest investment in the world. Just come then and invest your heart and life in it, and it will be the biggest investment you ever

made. And the more you invest in religion the more you get out of it. Give your heart to the Lord by faith and your life to him in service. Does religion pay? Yes, it is the biggest paying investment in this world.

VII

THE GOSPEL PLAN OF SALVATION

"Sirs, What must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."—Acts 16 : 30, 31.

One of the strangest things in the world is man's proneness to depart from God's ways, and to devise ways and plans of his own. Man has never been satisfied with God's way of doing things. He is always trying to improve upon God's plans; trying to take some short cut, even on the plan of salvation. But you cannot take a short cut on a straight road. You can take a short cut on a crooked road, but you cannot take a short cut on a straight road. And that is why you cannot take a short cut on the plan of salvation. God's plan—oh, how simple. And this very simplicity has often been the grounds of the rejection. Men, like Naaman of old, want to do some great thing instead of the simple thing God commands. Some people are always complaining about whatever comes their way, never satisfied. Some one has said:

> As a rule, man's a fool—
> When it's hot, he wants it cool,
> When it's cool, he wants it hot,
> Always wanting what is not,
> Ne'er content with what he's got.

Some men always think the other fellow's wife is sweeter and prettier than their own. Well, may be the other fellow's wife would not be so sweet and attractive if she

had to put up with your wife's husband. And then you do not see the other fellow's wife while she is trying to cook breakfast with wet stove-wood, a smoking stove, and everything going wrong, and before she gets her "make-up" on. Our surroundings have much to do with our lives. If you want a good wife, you must furnish her with a good husband. And it is very much the same with the man. May be some of you women would have better husbands if they only had better wives, and if you would not nag at them. That is one thing a man cannot put up with. Some women do not know how to do anything else. Love and lead is better than nag and drive. Now to the subject. Here is the simple plan of salvation found in the word of God. This is the only place in the Bible where the simple straightforward question is asked, "What must I do to be saved?" and the answer given, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." There are two other questions somewhat similar to this, and perhaps they mean practically the same thing as this one. One is where the rich young ruler said, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" and the other is where Paul said, "What shall I do, Lord?" But this is the only place where the simple question is asked, "What must I do to be saved?" with the simple answer, "Believe on the Lord, and thou shalt be saved." Here we have the Philippian jailer asking these men of God the way of salvation. He found salvation that night. Now, would it not be the part of wisdom for a lost sinner seeking salvation to find out what this man did and then do the same thing?

There are two general points of which I wish to take extended notice tonight: First, the penitent inquirer and his question, and secondly, the inspired instructor and his answer.

I. The Penitent Inquirer and His Question

The jailer fell down before Paul and Silas and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" *This question reveals* several very important things, and things absolutely essential to salvation. It reveals first of all *a realization of a lost condition.* I do not know just how the jailer came to that realization. It may have been the singing and praying of these men of God in the jail at midnight; it may have been the earthquake, and the loosing of the bands and the opening of the prison doors; it may have been the Holy Spirit; or perhaps all of these made such an impression upon the jailer as to cause him to realize that he was lost. He could not have asked this question had he not first realized that he was lost. Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, ere they had sinned, could not have asked that question, because they did not realize they were lost. We call this realization of a lost condition conviction. No matter what you call it. The change of the name does not change the fact. The jailer felt that he was lost. That is absolutely essential to salvation. No one can ever be saved until he gets to that point in his experience where he realizes that he is lost. The jailer had gotten to that point.

In the second place, *this question,* "What must I do to be saved?" *reveals a desire for salvation.* This is another thing which is absolutely essential in coming to God for salvation. No man ever received salvation until he got to that point in his experience where he desired salvation. God does not take men by the hair of the head, so to speak, and drag them into salvation. I grant you that men are sometimes convicted when they do not want to be convicted, and when they struggle against conviction, but they are not saved until they get to the point where

they "seek the Lord with the whole heart." "They that seek me early shall find me." This jailer was seeking salvation and found it. Man never finds salvation until he seeks salvation.

This question reveals, in the third place, *a lack of information on the subject.* Perhaps there is hardly one present here tonight who does not know the terms of salvation, but this was not true of this jailer. No doubt this was the first time he had come in contact with the Christian religion. Now, there is a certain amount of knowledge one must have if he is to be saved. If two persons are to be reconciled they must understand the terms of reconciliation. But one does not have to understand all the catch questions in the Bible before he can be saved. A man does not have to be a theologian in order to be saved, and whenever you hear a man asking such questions as "Who was Melchizedek's father, and who was Cain's wife?" in order to be saved, you may know that he is simply quibbling; he is not seeking salvation.

In one of Mr. Torrey's meetings a young man came to him after preaching one night and said: "Mr. Torrey, I want to be saved, but there are some things in the way of my salvation. If you will clear these matters up for me, then I think I can accept salvation." "Well, what are they?" Mr. Torrey asked. "I want you to explain to my satisfaction who Melchizedek's father was, and who Cain's wife was?" Mr. Torrey was too wise an evangelist not to know that that young fellow was quibbling. He pointed his finger at him and said, "What is your sin, sir?" The young fellow turned away without answering, and within two weeks' time that young fellow had run away with another man's wife. It was not Cain's wife, but some other fellow's wife, that was

troubling him. When you find a man quibbling that way, you may know he is just trying to make an excuse to cover up some secret sin. The truth is, if you ever get to the bottom of it, the man is usually living a double life. This jailer was not disturbed about Melchizedek's father, nor Cain's wife, but about his lost condition.

This question, "What must I do to be saved?" *reveals* a fourth fact, i. e., *that this man had come to the point where he was willing to receive information from any source whatsoever.* This man was a Roman officer, and when you remember the self-conceit and arrogancy of such an officer and think of his falling down before these despised Jews and asking them to teach him anything, it shows the depth and genuineness of his conviction. He believed these men were in touch with God and could tell him how to be saved. He was willing that anybody should tell him the way who knew it. Whenever a sinner is really in earnest about salvation he is willing to receive information from anybody on earth. But he must first realize that he is helpless and hopeless. If you were out in one of these dark bottoms and hopelessly lost, you would be glad to get information from anybody about how to get home. If you were to meet an old negro of this town and should say, "Sam, do you know the way out of here?" and he should say, "Yes, sir, I sho' do," would you then stand back and say, "I don't want him to show me anything, he is not my equal"? There is not one of you but would be glad to have him show you the way out, if you were really lost. I do not believe you have to go to the mourners' bench or any other bench in order to be saved, but I do believe you have to get to that point in your experience where you are willing to go to the mourners' bench, or any other bench, if necessary, to be saved.

A young master had an old negro slave who had been living on the place of his father for many years. He was a religious negro; and the young master had confidence in him and his religion. The master said to him one day, "Sam, I am in trouble, I want you to pray for me." The old negro said: "Thank de Lord, Massa, dat you's in trouble; yes, sar, I'll pray for you; come on right now." The old negro climbed over the fence, the young master following, and was going down the hillside toward a muddy, slimy pond. "Where are you going?" asked the young master. The reply was: "I am going right down into that pond. That is the best place on this farm to pray, and if you want me to pray for you you have to go to the middle of that pond." The master said: "I don't believe in your superstition. Pray right here." The negro said, "No, I can't pray good unless you go to the middle of the pond." The young master said: "Well, if you can pray any better in the middle of the pond than anywhere else, we will go. I want you to pray for me." The old negro said: "Massa, you's gitten about right. We can pray anywhar now." It was not the question of going down into the pond, but one of getting to the place where he was willing to go there, or anywhere else. The old negro was a real philosopher.

When I was a boy in Tennessee there was a Methodist meeting going on. Quite a number of boys and girls of the country school were being converted. A boy was there who had been reared in a Hard-shell Baptist family, who was convicted and in distress. When asked to come forward for prayer he refused to go, but he was in great agony. He said, "The Lord can save one here as well as anywhere else." One night, however, when the invitation was given he broke down and could not stand it any longer, and as he stepped out into the aisle he made

the surrender, and said: "It is all over; it is not necessary now for me to go. Glory to God, I'm saved!" While you do not have to go to any certain bench or place, you do have to get to that point in your experience where you are willing for God to have his way. The jailer was dead in earnest about it, and was willing for these despised Jews to instruct him in the way of salvation. He believed on the Lord with all his house, and he and all his house were saved and baptized that same hour of the night. The modern way is when the preacher tells one how to be saved is to say, "Some time when I have nothing else to do I will thrash it out." That is just as good as the devil wants. He wants you to be saved at any time except NOW, but *now* never suits him. The jailer settled that question that same hour of the night.

II. The Inspired Instructor and His Answer

If there ever was a man peculiarly fitted to give instruction in the way of salvation, Paul was that man. Many things seem to converge in his life to fit him for this task. First, he was a great man by nature. He had a giant intellect. His mind towered above men of ordinary intellects as the mountains tower above mole-hills. No man can read the epistles to the Ephesians, Romans, etc., without being impressed with the fact that Paul was an intellectual giant. He was also an educated man. He had completed the course at Tarsus, and had gone to Jerusalem and had taken a postgraduate course under Gamaliel. Paul was not only a great man but in addition to that he was a converted man. He was great by nature, greater by education, but greatest of all by the grace of God. Some sixteen years before this time, while on his way to Damascus, Paul was stricken down by a brightness above the brightness of the Syrian sun, and a voice

said unto him: "Saul, why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." The Lord told him what to do; Paul did it and so had an experience of grace. Not only was Paul an educated man, and a converted man, but an inspired apostle. He was born for the specific purpose of leading man out of darkness into the light. Then surely Paul was capable of telling a poor sinner how to be saved.

What did he tell him? He said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Do you believe Paul told that man the truth? Do you believe Paul told that man the whole truth and nothing but the truth? Have you the temerity to say, "I believe Paul kept back a part of the plan of salvation from this man"? Then if Paul told this man the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, would we not be justified, under similar circumstances, in telling a man the same thing, nothing more, nothing less? I think so. We believe in speaking where the Bible speaks, and in keeping silent where the Bible is silent.

But some one might say, "Paul did not tell that man to repent." There is a very good reason why he did not. Suppose Paul had said to this man, "Except you repent you shall perish," I think he would have said, "Oh, my friend, I realize that; tell me how to be saved." Suppose Paul had said, "The wicked shall be turned into outer darkness, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth," I think he would have said, "Oh, I believe that; will you tell me how to be saved?" Then Paul says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." Well, why did not Paul tell him that at first? He did, and it would have been the height of folly to have told him anything else. When Paul found a hard, rebellious sinner, he took him to Sinai and let him hear the mutterings of the law which

say, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die"; but when he found a penitent who had gotten to the point where this jailer was, he took him to Mount Calvary and let him hear those blessed words, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Paul believed in rightly dividing the word of truth, or in giving to each one that part of the word which was peculiarly adapted to his condition.

We learn two things from these facts: First, that this man, though penitent, had not believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. It is always repentance and faith. There is no account in the Bible where repentance and faith are mentioned in close proximity where they are not in that order. It is never reversed. Then repentance precedes faith. Some tells us that faith precedes repentance, and that one must believe that God is, before he can repent. But believing that God is is not exercising saving faith. The man that believes that God is, does nothing more than devils do; they believe that. Man can believe that God is, and that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and be damned while believing it. That is not saving faith. A man can believe from the evidence that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that he has provided a way of salvation for all men, and still be lost. One must take him as his personal Saviour before he can be saved. There is a difference between faith and belief. One of the troubles we have in the English language as used in the Bible today is that we have no verb to express the act of faith. We have *belief* and *believe;* but only one word for *faith.* If we had a verb to express the act of faith (e. g., faithe), we would not have this confusion. *Belief* and *faith* are not exactly the same, and therefore the acts of both cannot be accurately expressed by the

same word. Belief is the assent of the mind to a proposition based upon the evidence in the case, while faith is the consent of the heart and is not a question of evidence, but one of will. You have to believe a thing whether you want to or not, if you have the evidence. You might not want to believe that your son was out there drunk, but if you go out there and see it, you have to believe it whether you want to or not, because you have the evidence. But you do not have to *faithe* in or trust one, unless you want to. You do not have to commit yourself to a person, or thing, against your will. The words "commit" and "faith" are largely the same. When you commit yourself to one is when you exercise faith in one. A man says to a boatman: "I want to cross the river, but I must have some evidence that your boat is safe. I want to see it tested." The boat carries a load of passengers over and brings a load back, and the boatman says, "Are you satisfied?" The man says, "Yes." The boatman says, "Well, step on." The man says, "No, not yet." He can believe that the boat is perfectly safe, but unless he steps on he will never cross the river. When he steps onto the boat he then commits himself to it; he then trusts it. The stepping on is a question of will. He had to get to the point where he says, "I will." But a man can believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the Saviour of mankind, and that he offers salvation to all men without money and without price, and go to perdition believing it. You must not only believe he is God, but you must confess him, commit yourself to him. Committing yourself to the Lord Jesus Christ is a question of trust, or faith. "We are the children of God by faith." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." I was preaching with Doctor Eaton in the Fourth and Walnut Street Church

in Louisville some years ago, and one day three little boys came to the church to talk with the pastor about religion. They said to him, "Our mothers told us to come and talk to you, and if you thought we ought to join the church, we could do so." Doctor Eaton said, "Boys, I will give you a quarter apiece if you will meet me here at three o'clock this afternoon." They said, "All right." So at three o'clock Doctor Eaton was there, and the boys came in. He said to them, "Boys, what did you come here for?" One of them said, "We want to be Christians, and our mothers told us to come and talk with you about it." Another said, "We want to join this church if you find us to be all right." "What else did you come for?" asked Doctor Eaton. Finally one of the boys said, "You said you would give us a quarter apiece if we would meet you here at three o'clock." Doctor Eaton said, "Well, I did not owe you a quarter." They said, "No, sir." "Then why do you expect me to give you a quarter apiece?" They said, "Because you will do what you say you will." "Have you had any doubts about my giving you the quarter apiece?" They said, "No, sir, we know you will do just what you said you would." Doctor Eaton then said: "Now, boys, I did not hire you to meet me here, for you had already come; I wanted to illustrate faith. Boys, you say you have come expecting me to do exactly what I said I would do?" And they all said, "Yes, sir." Here Doctor Eaton handed them the quarters, saying: "If you can trust me and my word absolutely, can't you trust God? Can't you take him at his word?" Doctor Eaton then turned to the Bible and read Romans 10 : 9 and 10: "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with

the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." "Now, boys," said Doctor Eaton, "do you believe in your hearts that God has raised Christ from the dead, and are you willing to confess him with your mouths as your Saviour?" And they all said, "Yes." He said, "Do you believe God saves you because he has said he would?" They said, "Yes." Doctor Eaton said, "Let's pray." They all got down and prayed together, and after the prayer he said, "All right, boys, I am satisfied." They all joined the church, and I saw them baptized. There is nothing in this world that is simpler and plainer than the gospel plan of salvation. It is so plain and simple that a wayfaring man, though he be a fool, need not err. Men often stumble over its simplicity.

Now do you realize that you are a hell-deserving sinner, and that he offers you salvation without money and without price? He says, "Whosoever will may come," and "Him that cometh unto me I will in nowise cast out." If you believe in your heart and will confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus Christ, you shall be saved. It does not say when you do that and a few other things, you shall be saved. Whatever trouble I may have about my life, I have no trouble about the question of my salvation. I know I have believed in my heart and confessed with my mouth the Lord Jesus, and I believe God will do what he says he will. That is faith.

Are there those here tonight who will simply take God at his word, and trust Jesus Christ for salvation? If you will come and confess him as your Saviour he will abundantly pardon. "What must I do to be saved?" "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."

VIII

THE HOLY SPIRIT'S EARNEST APPEAL TO PROMPT ACTION

"The Holy Spirit saith, Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts."—Heb. 3 : 7, 8.

While I make an earnest appeal to the lost trying, by the help of the Lord, to get them to accept Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour, I want you Christians to apply this appeal to your own hearts and lives as to your Christian duty. As a matter of fact this text was addressed to Christian people, "To them who have obtained like precious faith with us." We rebuke the sinner for his rebellion saying, "How dare you rebel against the Spirit of God?" But is it not worse for us who claim to love the Lord to rebel against him, than it is for those who do not love him? My brother, my sister, do not rebel; if God speaks to you tonight to go speak to the lost, or to go out and invite some one to the service, do not harden your heart and rebel against the Spirit of God. And so while I shall appeal to the lost to be saved, I shall appeal to you at the same time to do your Christian duty. This is the appeal of the Holy Spirit. It is not my appeal.

I. The Time to Act—Today

Why does the Holy Spirit put in that word "today"? There must be some good reason for it. Every time this Scripture is quoted (and it is repeated twice in the third chapter of Hebrews, and quoted there from the Ninety-

fifth Psalm) it says "today." The Holy Spirit urges action today, but why? I think I can give you some good reasons why. First of all, because he knows how uncertain a thing is tomorrow. The Holy Spirit knows that thousands of souls are lifting up their fruitless cries in perdition who were making good resolutions for tomorrow, but to them tomorrow did not come. I recall a number of instances that have happened where I have been holding meetings. At Hickman, Kentucky, there was a young man who came to the service one night and was very much moved, and felt that he ought to go up and confess Christ, but he put it off. Going home that night with his sister he told her he felt very much like going up that night; that God's Spirit was moving upon him, and he wanted to go. She said, "Why didn't you go?" He said, "If I had gone tonight some one would have said that I simply wanted to show myself, as I had just gotten home from the West." That was the devil talking to him; it is marvelous the things he can suggest to keep people from being saved. The devil put that thought in his mind. The man said to his sister though, "The very next service I will go up." The sister was delighted that he had made up his mind to be saved. The next time did not come for him. The next time he was not there. The next morning early that young fellow was killed accidentally. I heard of the accident and went over. The broken-hearted sister told me what he said to her on the way home the night before. He resolved to do better the next time, but the next time never came. God does not give us any promises about the next time. God lives in the *now,* and he says, "Now is the accepted time; this is the day of salvation," and he does not promise you any tomorrow. I was holding a meeting in the First Baptist Church of Pine Bluff,

Arkansas, and we had a number of professions and additions; the people were coming in great crowds at every service, and they were standing up around the walls, and every available space was taken. Large numbers would go back into the Sunday-school rooms and hold prayer-meetings. One man was greatly concerned about his brother, who was wayward. Four men banded themselves together to pray and work for the salvation of that man. First, they were to get him to the services, and finally one night he was there, and the brother was delighted that this brother, who had not been to church for twenty years, had come to the service. That night after the service the Christian brother spoke to the man and told him he was so glad to see him at church and that he wanted him to become a Christian. The man said: "Yes, I am going to become a Christian, but it is the first time I have been to church in twenty years. I thought I would go up tonight, but could not get up the courage, but I have made up my mind to do so. I am going to settle the question tomorrow night." But he was not there the next night. The very next morning while he was washing his face for breakfast a stroke of apoplexy took him away. The next time did not come. The Holy Spirit knows there are multiplied thousands in perdition who were making good resolutions for tomorrow, and in good faith too, but they did not have a tomorrow.

Then the Holy Spirit knows too, that those who are making good resolutions for tomorrow and who may have a tomorrow, may be only less inclined than they are today. They were perfectly honest about it, they expected to act, but they did not. Why should you think you can do any better tomorrow than you can today when God's Spirit is drawing today, and he may not draw tomorrow;

and why should you think it would be easier to act after letting the devil win another victory over you? Every time you miss an opportunity to be saved, your opportunities are diminished by so much. If you had a thousand chances to be saved and only one chance to be damned, and you neglect the thousand chances to be saved, the one chance will damn you. If you had a thousand chances to be damned and only one chance to be saved, the one chance will save you if you seize and use it. If the Holy Spirit is drawing you tonight, do not harden your heart.

Again, the Holy Spirit knows that the devil is urging delay. This is the shrewdest trick of the devil. I do not believe the devil is fool enough to try to make men believe they have no souls, that there is no heaven, no hell; but I do believe the shrewdest trick of the devil is to teach procrastination. You become harder and harder and become entangled deeper and deeper in the meshes of sin, and the chances of your becoming saved are fewer every time you delay. The devil urges you to wait for that very reason. Did you ever think of the fact that when you say there will be a better time to be saved than today, you call in question either the omniscience or the veracity of God. When the devil says there will be a better time for you to be saved, he is saying God does not know, or he deliberately falsifies about it. For God says, "This is the time, the acceptable time," and the only time you have.

The Holy Spirit urges you to come to God today, because he knows if you are ever saved it must be in the now. No man was ever saved in the past, and no man can ever be saved in the future. It must be in the *Now*. As long as a man is "going to be saved" he is lost. The present is the only time in which men can act.

Time was, is gone,
Thou canst not it recall.
Time present thou hast.
Employ the portion small.
Time future is not, and may never be;
Time present is the only time for thee.

God's Word teaches that this is the accepted time, and that you have no right to trifle with your soul's eternal interest. The giver has the right to fix the time and the manner of a gift; but you have no right at all in the premises. Now if it were a debt God owed you, then you would have some rights as to when and how it should be paid; but salvation is a gift and if you accept it you must accept it as a gift and at his time, not yours. Having noticed the time to act, "Today," let us notice

II. The Condition on Which to Act

"If you hear his voice." Why does the Holy Spirit put in that condition, "If you hear his voice"? Why wait to hear his voice? Why should you wait to feel God's Spirit drawing you? Why not act whether he draws or not? Now, my friends, these are very good reasons why. He knows you cannot act without hearing it. The Holy Spirit knows that *you cannot come to God unless you are drawn by the Spirit.* "No man can come to me except the Father, which sent me, draw him." God must work in us both to will and to do, or we cannot will and cannot do. You can rebel against God's Spirit and refuse to act when he draws, but you cannot act without the drawing of the Holy Spirit. "No man can come to me except the Father, which sent me, draw him." It's a moral impossibility, and a spiritual impossibility for one to come to God without the drawing of the Spirit. There were several doctors who made headquarters in

my drug store when I was in the drug business. Two of them got into a heated argument one day about this point; they were men of about the same age; one was an infidel and the other a Christian. The Christian doctor said a man could not do anything without some incentive or impelling power. The infidel said, "I can create within myself the inclination to act and do anything I please." The Christian man said, "You cannot do a thing unless there is a motive for the action." "Yes," said the other, "I can create within myself the motive." The Christian said, handing the other man his knife, "Take this knife and drive it into my heart." The infidel said, "I can do it." The other said, "Well, do it." The infidel said, "But there is no reason for my doing it." The Christian doctor said, "That is just why you cannot do it." The infidel said, "I can, but I don't want to do it." "That is the trouble," said the Christian doctor, "there is no incentive to do it, but if I should spit in your face then you could drive it up to the hilt into my heart." He might have felt like driving it up to the hilt into his heart and yet rebelled against the inclination, but he could not do it without the incentive. It is a moral impossibility for a man to act without motive or incentive. If you cannot come when he is drawing, how can you come when he is not drawing? You may rebel against the drawing but you can't act without it, for there will be no incentive, no motive for action; and the devil knows that as well as the Holy Spirit knows it. If he can get you to delay until God's Spirit draws no longer, then he knows it is settled. Your doom is fixed. Your condition for eternity is sealed.

Again, I think the Holy Spirit puts in this condition, "If you hear his voice," because he knows *there are some who have heard God's voice in other days who do not*

hear it now. Sometimes you hear men say: "The gospel has lost its power; it does not draw now as it once did." The change is in the sinner, not in the gospel. I think the Holy Spirit urges action today because he knows some will never hear his voice again. God's Spirit will not always strive with men. God's voice has already ceased to strive with some. A preacher once told me he was riding along the pike in Shelby County, Kentucky, one day when he saw quite an old man breaking rock on the side of the pike. He said it came into his mind to speak to the man and ask him how old he was. The man said, "I am eighty years old." "The Lord has spared you for a long time," said the preacher, "are you a Christian?" The old man dropped his mallet and said, "No, I am not a Christian." The preacher said, "Don't you think you should be?" "Yes," said the old man, "I wish I were; I ought to have been long ago. I expected to be, but I have missed my opportunity." The preacher said, "May be not." He said: "It is too late now; it is settled." He said: "When I was a young man I fully intended to be a Christian. I had no thought of neglecting my opportunity. Sometimes God's Spirit would draw, and I would almost have to hold the back of the pew where I was to keep from going up, and finally that impression left me, and for forty years I have had no impression of that kind." The preacher said, "Maybe there is yet a chance." "No, it is too late," said the old man. "I have had no impressions of that kind for forty years now. I would give my right arm just to feel that impression once more, but there is no chance for me." That is one of the saddest things in the world. Too late; too late!

Of all sad words of tongue or pen,
The saddest are these, *It might have been.*

Your pastor told me today of a prominent lawyer in Alabama who talked with him and told him that he had an opportunity once to be saved, but he finally delayed on account of a dirty deal which he was negotiating. He said it was a question of becoming a Christian or robbing an estate of a farm which he had his heart set upon. He finally said to himself: "I had better get this plantation now; better take this farm while I can get it and look after salvation later." He threw off the impression of the Spirit and got the farm, but God's Spirit departed from him and never came again. The old lawyer said, "William, go ahead and preach to young men, but don't waste your time on old men like me who have lost their opportunity." One of the saddest things in all the world is to see a man sit down coolly and say, "There is a chance of salvation for me, but I'll take worldly gain now and take my chance on salvation later." Maybe there is some man here tonight who has felt God drawing him in other days, but who has simply rebelled against God's Spirit until God has said, "Let him alone." And maybe he has not been disturbed by the Spirit of God since. If you hear his voice, if you feel his drawing, act today. Now, for God's sake and for your soul's sake don't miss your opportunity. Next, let us notice

III. The Specific Action Enjoined

"Harden not your heart." Every man has the power to harden his own heart. You can exercise the powers of your own volition, but do not use them to rebel against the Spirit of God when he is offering you salvation without money and without price. This is hazardous; it is a tragedy. But what does it mean to harden one's heart? Heart here, of course, does not mean this organ of flesh. It means what you usually mean when you say a man is

hard-hearted or tender-hearted. You do not have reference to this organ that pumps the blood through the body. A kind-hearted man is one who feels sympathy and has brotherly kindness. And when God speaks of the heart he means that part of the man which hates, loves, feels, wills; the sensibilities of the man. How does one harden one's heart? As he hardens the muscles? You put a man out in a ditch with a spade, and if he will keep that up his muscles will become hard. They will not be sore and tender as they once were, they become hardened. A man hardens his heart as he hardens his conscience. Do you remember the first time you swore an oath, and how that night you could not sleep? Maybe the next time it troubled you again but not so much, but by and by you got to the point where you could swear without any compunction of conscience. You had hardened your conscience. You can rebel against your conscience until it becomes seared. You can disregard the appeals of God until you cannot feel him draw any more; you have become insensible to his voice. Did you ever try an alarm clock? The first morning it went off you jumped up and did wish the thing would hush. It seemed that it would wake up everybody on the place. For a while you would hear it go off and you would turn over and sleep on, and finally you slept on and never heard it at all. The clock was not at fault, it made just as much noise as ever; there was no change in it; but by disregarding that sound, you had become insensible to it. God says that men, by rebelling against his law, harden their own hearts and blind their own eyes and stop their own ears. Men can rebel against the truth until they get to the point where they believe truth is error and error is truth. If you close the only door of hope that is open to you, you have done it yourself. If you put out your eyes deliberately you can-

not blame God if you grope in darkness the balance of your life. God has given you opportunities, and if you deliberately throw them away you have done it yourself.

It is a terrible thing for a man who has an opportunity to be saved, deliberately to throw away his chance of heaven and take hell. There are two places for the departed spirits of men, and the departed soul will go to that place for which it is fitted, when it leaves the body. There is nothing else left for you to do, if you will not accept salvation, but to accept damnation. He is offering to you salvation tonight, and he says, " Harden not your hearts." Some of these girls and boys are old enough to be saved, and yet who are not saved, according to their own testimony. There are older people here too, who ought to act tonight, because God's Spirit is moving. Will this entire congregation pray for God's Spirit to move mightily on this people tonight that those who are lost may be saved? Oh, open up your hearts, and let Jesus come in. What will you do with Jesus tonight? What will you do with the question of your salvation tonight? Harden not your heart.

IX

PREPARE TO MEET GOD

"Prepare to meet thy God."—Amos 4 : 12.

We come to the last service of this series of meetings, and as my last message I urge you to prepare to meet God.[1] Now it may be that most of you are already prepared to meet God, that is to say, you are Christians and you are saved. But I dare say if you knew this would be the last night you would have on earth and at sunrise in the morning you would be called on to give account of the deeds done in the body, there would be many things that you would want to straighten up. If we all knew this was the last night we would have on earth, this whole town would be in a mighty stir tonight. Inasmuch as we do not know that we shall not be called into eternity tomorrow, we should act as if it were the last day on earth; then we shall do the right thing. We come to this last appeal for you to prepare to meet God. Inasmuch as we must meet God both here and hereafter, I shall use this text in this way; and I think I do no violence to the Scripture.

This is the only place to prepare for the real life which is to come. Do we really believe that doctrine? There is a legend, simply a myth, but it has a moral: That once upon a time a being came to this earth from a planet where death was unknown. He had been wined and dined, taken into the halls of amusement and the busy marts of

[1] These sermons are not given in the order in which they were delivered.

commerce. Finally, he was taken to the cemetery. This was a new sight to him. He said, "What is that?" The answer was, "That is the place where we bury the dead." "What do you mean by the dead?" he asked. They said, "These people you see on the streets do not live always, they die, and we bury them under these mounds." "And what becomes of them after they die?" he asked. "That just depends. Those who are prepared for heaven by repentance and faith go to heaven, and those who are not prepared for heaven go into eternal punishment." "Do you mean to tell me," said he, "that these people go to a place of eternal joy, or to eternal punishment, and that only those go to the place of eternal happiness who have made preparation for it, and yet I have seen nobody making preparations to go to heaven? Do you really believe it?" My friends, do we really believe that this is not our home; that this is only a place of preparation for eternity, and not really where we spend it? It seems to me sometimes when I think of the time that is given to preparation for this life and how little time we give to that life which is beyond, that we do not believe the doctrine we preach of immortality, and that there are but two places to which we can go after death—eternal bliss and eternal punishment.

I. All Must Meet God

This is inevitable. It is not a question of whether we are prepared to meet God or not. All must die, and after death the resurrection and the judgment. We must meet God whether we are prepared or unprepared. We have to meet him in the calamities here in this life. One may refuse to entertain the very thought of God while in the prime of manhood and the vigor of strength. I think sometimes one can

resist the Spirit and go out into the halls of revelry or into the busy marts of commerce and drive away the very thought of God. But in driving away the consciousness of the presence of God you have done a hazardous thing. Some people will go out and get drunk, to drown their troubles. Yes, you can drown your troubles in this way, for when you get drunk you get into a bigger trouble and lose sight of the less. Sometimes men succeed in drowning the consciousness of the Spirit of God when he is knocking at their hearts. The Holy Spirit may leave you at your bidding and may not return at your call. You will call, and he will not answer. Again, we must face God in death. You cannot get away from him then, you have to face God, for death is God's messenger. It must be a terrible thing to think, "I have spent my life in sin and rebellion against God, and now I am dying and I am forced to stand face to face with him." Oh, I think one would feel relieved if he knew God would never call him before him again, but that is not the last of it. You will have to come before God in the resurrection morning. John tells us the hour is coming when all in the graves shall come forth. Some tell us that the wicked have perished in death, that they are not in their graves. But John seems to have given this Scripture to answer that very heresy. He not only says, "All who are in their graves shall come forth," but he adds: "They that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation." The wicked have not perished. They are in their graves, and they are going to have to come forth. Both classes are there, John tells us. Maybe you think that is the end of it. But we must all stand before him in the great judgment.

Jesus Christ is to be the Judge on that momentous occasion. I am glad he is, not that I think God would not give us justice, but I think Jesus will look on us in sympathy, as he has had a human body and has been tempted as we have. Yes, when Peter comes up and says, "Lord, you know how I denied you and cursed; I am ashamed of it," I think Jesus will say to Peter, "I can sympathize with you, Peter, as I have been tempted in all points as you have." Yes, God has committed all judgment into the hands of the Son. I imagine it will be a great sight when all the nations of the earth come up before Jesus Christ, and he shall separate the sheep from the goats. God knows who they are, and they themselves know where they belong. This is not to be a day of examination, or a day of trial, but a day of assignment for all eternity. It is going to be a great day. And Jesus will say to those on the right hand, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world," and to those on the left hand he will say, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels"; and as the nations of the earth come up they will separate themselves, to the right and to the left; they know where they belong. The righteous will turn into that place prepared for them from the foundation of the world, and the wicked will turn into that place prepared for the devil and his angels, as Jesus speaks that terrible sentence to them, "Depart, ye cursed." Now, you can decide the question here tonight, but if you put it off till then you cannot decide it. As death finds you, so will the Judgment receive you, and as the Judgment receives you, so will eternity retain you. As the tree falls so it must lie. I beseech you to determine to-

night whether you will seek God now, or continue in your sin and hear that awful doom, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels." What will you do tonight? Are you going to rebel against God, and hear the appeal of Satan and follow him? Oh, hear the voice of God, and not the voice of the devil. Having noticed the fact that all must meet God, next I wish to notice

II. All by Nature Are Unprepared to Meet God

We are, by nature, the children of wrath and not of God. We are conceived in sin and brought forth in iniquity. We take to sin as naturally as water runs down-hill or the sparks fly upward. We are by nature depraved. We are aliens by birth and sinners by practise. Depravity is that innate disposition in us that causes us to sin, and sin is the transgression of law. "But," says somebody, "is not that the old doctrine of total depravity?" Yes. "But I do not like that doctrine," you say. I do not like it either, but it is a fact. I do not like sin; I do not like smallpox, but they are facts nevertheless. My not liking a thing does not change the fact. We do not mean when we say a man is totally depraved, however, that he is as mean as he can be. All are totally depraved; yet some are worse than others, and some could be worse than they are, and some could be better than they are, the Lord knows they could. When man fell, the whole man fell; no part of the man escaped the fall. If I should take a glass of water and put a grain of strychnine in it, the whole would be poisoned. No part of that water has escaped. If I should put an ounce of strychnine in it there would be more poison to the quantity of water, but the glass of water would not be more totally poisoned than before. When man fell, the

whole man fell; that is what we mean by total depravity. We do not have to go to the Book to prove that men are totally depraved. But somebody asks, "Does not that mean that we are damned for Adam's sin?" No. We are not only depraved by nature, but we are sinners by practise. There is the trouble with us. We have no right to complain of Adam's sin, so long as we indorse it by our practise. If you are damned for your own sins you will have a plenty to account for.

But some one may say, "But how do those who die in infancy escape the penalty of Adam's transgression?" They escape it through the death of Christ. Adam was the federal head and representative of the race in the fall. We had nothing to do with the fall; it was brought on us without our knowledge or consent. Jesus Christ, called the second Adam, came and paid the penalty of the Adamic sin without our knowledge or consent. Because Christ has paid the penalty of Adam's sin, the infant who dies before reaching the years of accountability is saved. Infants are not citizens under the law, but when they come to the years of accountability they become accountable for their own sins, and unless they accept Jesus Christ as their substitute they must suffer the penalty. Suppose a man out here comes to town with his son three or four years old, and the boy thinks it would be royal sport to stick a match to the livery barn and watch it go up in smoke. He does it. The officer of the law lays hold of the father and says: "You pay the cost of this damage. You are responsible for the conduct of that child." Why does he not take the child? That child is not a citizen under the law. He is an infant; cannot sue or be sued. But you wait about fifteen or twenty years. The child has grown to manhood. Now he comes to town and gets on a whiz and paints the

town red. The officer seizes him and makes him pay the penalty. Why did he not arrest the young man's father again? Because the young fellow has crossed that invisible line between infancy and citizenship known under the law, and the father is not legally responsible for him. The father can still step in and say, "I'll pay his fine." If the son will accept the father's offer he can go free; but you cannot force the father to do it, neither can you force the son to accept the father's substitution. It must be voluntary on both sides. Jesus Christ came into the world and paid the penalty of the Adamic sin, and until the infant has crossed the invisible line between accountability and non-accountability, he has no sin of his own, and so cannot be condemned; so if the infant dies in that state he is saved by the death of Christ. And his case is just as sure as Jesus Christ, because his case does not depend upon what he does, but upon what Christ has done for him. I do not think you can find anything dangerous or serious about that doctrine. The doctrine of total depravity is a Bible doctrine, and the best way to escape it is not to deny it, but to accept the fact and put your case in the hands of Jesus who has paid the debt.

Having noticed the fact that all must die, that we must all meet God, and that we, by nature, are unprepared to meet God, hence the third point:

III. The Necessity of Preparation

Preparation is necessary if we are to have a pleasant and profitable meeting with God. Are you prepared to meet God tonight? If you are not prepared to meet God tonight, then prepare this night to meet God. Somebody will say, "Who should prepare to meet God?" The answer is, "The old man whose hair is white with the frosts of many winters needs to make preparation." But

while the old must die, the young may die, and do die. More people die young than ever die old. You say, "The wicked old villain who has committed the sin of murder, drunkenness, adultery, and every crime known to man, needs preparation to meet God." Yes, he needs to prepare to meet God, but that man does not need it any worse than the most innocent girl in this house who is unsaved. He is nothing more than lost, and she is nothing less than lost. They are both lost alike and for the same reason.

The great apostle declares that "There is no difference, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." They are both condemned alike and for the same sin—non-belief. There is no difference as to the offer of salvation, no difference as to the terms of salvation, and no difference as to the character of salvation which they receive; absolutely no difference. They are both sinners and condemned because they have not believed on Jesus Christ. Salvation is offered to all men, without money and without price. The terms of salvation are repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Mother, do not delude yourself into thinking that, because Johnnie is a good boy, he does not need as much salvation as does that old wicked villain in the community. Paul says, "There is no difference, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Then the innocent, the moral, the good, if there be such, out of Christ, all need salvation as much as the vilest sinner in the world. For they are all lost alike. "Do you mean that I can make myself any better, when you say I should prepare to meet God?" No, if you could cleanse yourself of one sin you could cleanse yourself of two, then three, and indefinitely. Thus you would need no Saviour. The only preparation that you need is to know yourself to be

lost, and to know that provision has been made for your salvation, and that you can accept it as it is offered to you on the terms of the gospel.

"Is there any certain place, or bench, to which I must go?" No. But you have to get to that place in your experience, however, where you are willing to do anything or be anything or go anywhere. This means that you must let God save you in his own way. You can't save yourself. "But don't I have to suffer for my sins before I can be saved?" The Bible does not recognize the doctrine of penance. You cannot by suffering render yourself any better in God's sight. Jesus Christ suffered once, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us unto God. Some say: "There is plenty of time yet. It is not necessary that I be saved tonight." How do you know that it is not necessary to be saved tonight? How do you know you can be saved at some other time? God does not say you have plenty of time yet. That suggestion comes from the devil. For God says: "Now is the time; now is the accepted time; this is the day of salvation." He makes you no promise of tomorrow. You have no assurance that if you rebel against the Spirit tonight, he will knock again; and you cannot come without his drawing. It is a hazardous thing for you to take your salvation into your own hands and go contrary to the expressed will of God.

We have no right to say any man has gone to heaven who has made no preparation for heaven. There is a story of an old slave in ante-bellum days whose master had died. A friend of this man met the old slave one day and said, "Sam, I understand your master has gone to heaven." "I don't know, sir, about that," was the reply. "Well, isn't he dead?" "Yes, sir, massa he's dead all right, but I don't know about his going to

heaven." "Well, if he is dead why don't you know he has gone to heaven?" The old negro said: "When massa going anywhere he always tell us about it. We see him getting ready. But I never did hear massa say anything about going to heaven and I never did see him getting ready for heaven, so I don't know about his going there." That is good philosophy. I am glad preachers are getting to the point where they will not lie about a man when preaching at his funeral, and try to make it appear that he has gone to heaven when he has never made any preparation for heaven. The fellow that has run with him in sin, hearing the preacher say he has gone to heaven, says, "Well, I'm all right then." You had better let the truth be told than to send others to hell trying to take care of the feelings of the family. Say absolutely nothing of his life if he has not lived right in the community. The man who does not deserve eulogies should not have them, and the man who deserves them does not need them. If I say anything about a man of this kind I say: "It is not necessary for me to tell you (the relatives and friends of this man) his manner of life. You know that better than I do." We should be honest with the people. I am honest with you tonight when I tell you that if you do not believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and confess him, you will spend eternity in hell. "He that believeth not shall be damned," but if you believe with all your heart and confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, you will be saved.

I trust you will take your stand with God's people now while he is calling and the Spirit is drawing. Repent of your sins, believe on Christ. Come out and confess him, if you have not already confessed him. *Do it now.* Prepare to meet thy God.

X

DIVINE ABANDONMENT

"Ephraim is joined to his idols, let him alone."—Hosea 4 : 17.

It is a hazardous thing to trifle with God. There are those who seem to think they can trifle with God as a child trifles with his toy. "The mills of the gods may grind slowly, but they grind exceeding small." We used to sing an old song,

> While the lamp holds out to burn
> The vilest sinner may return,

but that is hymnology and not theology. There is no Scripture that says you can be saved whenever it suits you.

God not only has ways and means for doing things, but times as well. And whenever we fail to do things at God's time, we fail for all time, for there is no time but God's time. Some of us have never yet accepted the fact that God has definite times for doing things, and that if we miss God's time the opportunity is gone forever; but this is true. A failure to recognize this important fact has wrought havoc with many a soul.

I. Does God Really Abandon Men?

Does God teach that there is danger of being abandoned and left in sin? Does God teach that there is a limit to his patience? I think I can show you that he does. You remember the case of the children of Israel

when they went up to spy out the promised land. God promised to go with them, saying, "I'll fight your battles and give you the land." The spies went up and came back and made a report. Some said, "They are giants over there." But what difference did it make if their enemies were giants and they but grasshoppers in their sight, so to speak, so long as they had God to fight their battles? God was no grasshopper, and he was going to do the fighting. When we consider ourselves as grasshoppers before our enemies they will consider us even less than grasshoppers. But if God is with us, what do we care, whether they are small or great, few or many? However, they refused to go up and take the land, saying, "We are not ready to go." So God said, "Ye shall never go." Then they wanted to go but God said: "No. If you try to possess the land now, your enemies will chase you out like bees, for I'll not go with you." God never gave them another chance. Some people say: "God ought to have given them another chance; he ought to have given them just one more chance anyway." But he did not. You may think you are wiser and better than God, but he gave them that opportunity, and he never gave them another. They died in the wilderness. God's time to go was the only time they could go.

You recall the parable which Jesus spoke in the fourteenth chapter of Luke, about the man who made a great supper and bade many to come, for all things were now ready. Those who had been bidden began to make excuses. One said he had bought a piece of land and had to go to prove it; and another had bought five yoke of oxen, and he had to go and try them; and another had married a wife, and so he could not go to the big supper. Now Jesus tells us this parable is like unto the kingdom of heaven. The master of that house said to his servants,

"Go out into the highways, and constrain them to come in." The King James version says, "compel," but "compel" carries with it the idea of force. He did not compel them, but he constrained them; that is the meaning of the original Greek. But as to those men who had been bidden, "They shall never taste of my supper." Jesus said that is like unto the kingdom of heaven. Those who have been invited to partake of God's blessings and make frivolous excuses, will never have another opportunity. The master of the house said, "They shall never taste of my supper." This is the main thought in this parable. Again, Jesus said to his disciples, "Go into the cities, and preach unto the people, and if they hear you, all right, but if they refuse to hear you, brush the dust off your feet and go on to others." But somebody says, "He ought to have given them a few more chances." Well, why? One chance is more than other cities have had. Many of the cities had never had one opportunity yet. He said, you just leave them and go on to other cities.

You remember the Scriptures which I read—from the Second Psalm and Proverbs, the first chapter, and the fifty-ninth of Isaiah, and the first chapter of Romans, and the twenty-ninth chapter of Proverbs—where it says: "He that being often reproved, and hardeneth his neck, shall be suddenly destroyed, and that without remedy"; "You shall seek me diligently, but you shall not find me"; "You will call, but I will not answer"; "You shall eat the fruit of your own doing"; "God's arm is not shortened that he cannot save, but your sins have so separated between you and your God that he will not hear"; God said, "My spirit shall not always strive with man." I have seen at least one man who told me that God's Spirit had been withdrawn from him. And he gave good evidence that this was true. I was holding

a meeting in a small village in Kentucky some years ago, and this man was a regular attendant at the preaching services every night. He sat there every night on the end of the same pew next to the aisle, and paid close attention to the preaching. One night as I was going to my room it was raining, and I was walking along the plank-walk under my umbrella, I noticed that a man was following close to me. As I turned into the gate, at the house where I was stopping, he came up to me and said, "Brother, I'd like to speak to you a moment." So I held my umbrella over us both as I stopped and leaned over the gate. I noticed that this man was the same young man who sat on a certain seat every night and had paid such close attention to the preaching. He said, "I wish you would tell me what the unpardonable sin is." I told him I thought it was deliberately and wilfully to attribute the works of the Holy Spirit to the devil. Jesus says all other sins may be pardoned except blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, and the connection shows that this blasphemy was wilfully attributing the works of the Holy Spirit to the devil. They had seen Jesus performing miracles and had said he was doing it by the prince of the devils. "They who blaspheme against the Holy Spirit shall never be forgiven." I think one has to sin against light—do it wilfully and maliciously—to commit the unpardonable sin. I know some folks tell us *unbelief* is the unpardonable sin. Now unbelief is an unpardoned sin but not unpardonable. There is a difference between *unpardoned* and *unpardonable*. Unpardonable means that it cannot be pardoned. I saw when I got through explaining to this young man what the unpardonable sin is, that he was not satisfied, and so I said, "What is the trouble with you?" He hesitated a long time but finally said, "I have committed the unpardonable sin." I said, "I hope not."

He said: "I have; there is no salvation for me. God's Spirit has abandoned me forever." I said, "What have you done?" He said: "I deliberately and wilfully cursed God. I don't know why I did it; I was perfectly rational when I did it. Something was annoying me and hounding me, and I could not get away from it." I imagine conviction was working upon him. He said: "I could not get away from it. I finally got mad and deliberately cursed God. When I did that a peculiar feeling came over me; it was a feeling of the absence of something rather than the presence; and from that day until this, I have had that same peculiar feeling that something has left me. I believe God's Spirit has abandoned me." I said: "I hope not. I don't know what it means to curse God. I notice you have been at the preaching service every night, and seem to be interested." He said: "Yes, I hear you preach, and I can reason all right, my understanding is all right; I hear the preaching, but it does not move my feelings a particle." I said, "Well, you come on to the services every time, and if God's Spirit ever impresses you to make a move, you seize the opportunity and act right then." He said, "I will come, but the Spirit never moves me." He came on to every service, but he was never impressed at all, so far as I could see. He could not come to God if the Spirit did not draw him. One day before I left that place I was taking dinner at a home and was talking about the meeting, and I said something about this man, and the good sister in the home said, "Every preacher who had come to that place for years had been asked by this same man to explain what the unpardonable sin was." She said, "He came out here once and went out to the tobacco-patch where my husband was at work and asked him that question, but so far as we know he has never before told

anybody why he was asking that question." I want to say God will not allow men to trifle with him. Now, certainly God, the Great Sovereign Ruler of the Universe, will not allow men to curse and defy him. It is a terrible thing for a man to rebel against God, harden his heart, and miss his opportunity of salvation. "Ephraim is joined to his idols, let him alone." He is as a cake unturned. We learn from the Bible that men may seek repentance and find it not. You may call when God will not hear. Paul says three times in Romans, the first chapter, "God gave them up," and "left them to their own sins," and "gave them over to hardness of heart and reprobate living." They would have it so. They did not want to remember God. God gave them up and let them suffer the consequences of their own rebellious will and corrupt lives. It is a hazardous thing to trifle with God.

II. How Does God Abandon Men?

What does it mean to be abandoned of God? I think it means that God withdraws and withholds all divine influences and leaves one alone. I think that is what he did to this man I have just told you about. The Spirit of God abandoned him and left him. I think it means that God says to the Holy Spirit, "Let him alone, he has treated you with contempt." I think it means that God says to his ministers, "Let him alone, give your time to somebody else." I think sometimes it is best to leave some men alone and go to others, for it is time thrown away to labor longer with such men. We might spend the time to better advantage trying to reach children. No man has the right to go to hell. It is wrong to go to hell, and no man has the right to do wrong, but every man has the

privilege of going to hell. God says to the Holy Spirit and to his ministers, " Let him alone." And I think God says to the man's conscience, " Let him alone and let him not be disturbed again until he is disturbed by the fires of hell." I think it means that God not only withdraws and withholds all the means of grace, but that he gives the man over wholly to the bad. Oh, with what rapidity a man must go to perdition when all restraints and constraints are withdrawn and he is given over wholly to the influence of the devil. There are men who will oppose everything that is righteous, every religious measure, and will favor the licensed saloon, bawdy houses, and everything that is corrupt. They are certainly given over wholly to the service of the devil. That sort of man has sold out wholly to the devil, so " Let him alone, he is joined to his idols."

Again, I think it means that the man is given over to final destruction. Many years ago a large excursion boat, the Benjamin Franklin, was going down the Ohio river with an excursion party, and there was an old negro on the bank who saw that the boat was on fire in the hull. The boat was crowded with gay passengers, and they were having a great time with music and dancing. The old negro shouted to them, waving his hat, and telling them the boat was on fire. They only jeered at him and said: " Go away, you old fool, you are trying to disturb our pleasure. Go on about your business and let us alone." He could not let them alone, however; he ran down and got a skiff and started down the river after them, knowing that they would soon be leaping into the river. But they went on reveling and merrymaking and before the old negro had overtaken them the vessel was wrapped in the flames which were bursting forth from the hull. He

rescued as many as he could. They were glad to have his help then. If they had only heeded the warning they might all have escaped. You say, "The preacher is trying to scare us." There are many people in this community who ought to be scared. I would to God I could scare you, because some of you are in great danger. Oh, I would to God I could scare you tonight and get you to realize your danger. You would better be disturbed in your sins than be damned for your sins. The one who causes you to flee to safety is your friend. God grant that you may be scared tonight, and realize that there is great danger ahead; there is danger in delay. God's time is the only time to act.

III. Why Does God Abandon Men?

Does he do it simply because he has the power? No. Well, does he do it because it gives him pleasure? No, for he assures us that he takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked. God does it because there is no other course for him to pursue. When a man deliberately refuses to accept the offers of mercy, there is nothing left him but justice. And it is the height of folly for any man to complain because God lets men go to hell. Men blaspheme, saying, "God sends his children to hell." No, God does not let his children go to hell. None of God's children go to hell. God does not even send his rebellious subjects to hell; they go there themselves. The very fact that he gave his Son to die and sends the Holy Spirit to draw men to him is proof that God takes no pleasure in the destruction of the wicked. Can you think of anything which God might have done for the salvation of men that he has not done? I can think of nothing else, unless God might have saved men regardless of their wishes. But that is unthinkable. That would make God

a monster. Men are free to act of their own volition and not mere machines. As it is you have no grounds to complain. No man has any right to complain because salvation is not universal so long as the offer is universal. What would you think of a man who has furnished for him a nice home free of rent by the company for which he is working, standing outside cursing the company because it allows one of its employees to stay out and take the weather? I think you would say he is a knave. Well, what do you think of the man who curses God because he lets men go to hell when salvation is offered to all men without money and without price? He does everything that can be legitimately done for man's salvation. But God allows man to act for himself. When men go to hell, they do it with their eyes open, and they go in spite of God's offers of salvation, the drawing of the Spirit, and the preaching of his word. It is a hazardous business to trifle with God. His spirit will not always strive with men.

There is a time, we know not when,
A place, we know not where,
That marks the destiny of men
To glory or despair.

There is a line to us unseen,
That crosses every path,
That hidden boundary between
God's patience and his wrath.

To cross that limit is to die,
To die as if by stealth,
It may not quench the beaming eye,
Nor pale the glow of health.

You may go on just as bright and happy as before, not knowing that you are doomed until you are finally

damned; but when once you cross that line your doom is sealed. That line is drawn somewhere, and whenever you pass out of God's patience into his wrath it is settled for all time and for eternity.

Men, it may be that some of you have not yet settled the question definitely as to what you will do. You cannot afford to trifle with God. He says: "Whosoever will may come"; "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life, and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God lieth on him." Will you come out and accept Jesus as your personal Saviour now? Life and death are set before you, and you must choose for yourself. Nobody can choose for you. I urge you to accept life and live. When we beseech you it is as though Christ himself did beseech you, for we beseech you in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God. If you deliberately rebel, you do it with your eyes open and knowing what the consequences are. You cannot afford to do it. God have mercy upon you. If there is an unsaved one here who feels God's Spirit drawing, do not rebel. If you hear his voice, harden not your heart. Where, oh where will you spend eternity? Will you settle that question here and now? It is too late to settle it when you are in eternity. This is the time. This is the day of salvation.

XI

APOSTOLIC PREACHING

"And daily in the temple and in every house they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus Christ."—Acts 5 : 42.

I call this apostolic preaching, because it is the kind of preaching the apostles did. I suppose that makes it apostolic. Preaching is the divinely appointed method of saving the lost, building up the saved, and propagating the principles of the Christian religion to the ends of the earth. Nothing in the divine economy can take the place of preaching. The circulation of religious literature helps in spreading the gospel, and some can do no better service than to scatter good religious tracts. We are told that Mrs. J. Lawrence Smith, of Louisville, a very cultured woman, took tracts and leaflets, and went out on the streets with a friend and invited the people to services at the church. On one of her trips she went into hotels and met the guests and invited them out to service. One young man who was playing an important rôle in a theatrical performance, was asked if he were a Christian, and he said, "No." Mrs. Smith gave him a leaflet on the way of salvation, invited him to the services, and insisted that he should come. The young man promised to come when he could get off, saying, "I can come to the afternoon service, as I am not engaged at that hour." He attended the afternoon service of a meeting in the Fourth and Walnut Street Church, and was converted and afterwards became pastor of that same church. This was Dr.

George C. Lorimer, one of our great preachers. Mrs. Smith did not consider herself too good or too wealthy to render that kind of service, and perhaps she could have rendered no greater service than that. I recommend it to you. Then the circulation of religious papers is a good thing. I think every Christian home should have at least one religious paper in it; the paper of the denomination to which you belong. You cannot keep up with your denomination unless you take your paper. As a matter of fact, we send our children to school and teach them to read and try to cultivate the reading habit, and then fail to furnish them good literature. They are going to read something, and it ought to be good, religious literature; they will read bad literature if there is nothing else for them to read. But all of this cannot take the place of preaching in the divine economy. I have heard good sermons on the phonograph, but these cannot take the place of a living man preaching to living men. I heard William Jennings Bryan once on the tariff question on a phonograph; I could recognize his voice and his arguments, but it did not stir me as the man himself did when I heard him on that question. His personality was not there. Preaching the word on a phonograph would not have the same effect that a living man talking to living men would have.

However, I fear our present conception of preaching is modern instead of apostolic. We talk of up-to-date preaching. It is not up-to-date preaching, but back-to-date preaching we need. I am reminded of a young surgeon who went out to perform a very difficult operation. On his return some one asked him, "How was the operation?" "A brilliant success," said he. "How is the patient getting along?" was the next question. And with an air of disgust the surgeon said, "Oh, the patient

is dead, but the operation was a success." Well, if his purpose was simply an operation he succeeded. Sometimes I feel as if preachers are much like the surgeon. They get off a great oration, and think it is a great success with no results. Every sermon ought to have an object. Oh, if we could just get back to date in our preaching and go after the lost, heart to heart, in every service; that is the kind of preaching that will bring the most glorious results. That's what we need.

I. When They Preached

"Daily." It does not say they preached on Sunday. That is too often for some people. Once a month is often enough for some. I believe every church ought to have worship every Lord's Day. And whether you can have preaching every Sunday or not, I believe you ought to meet and worship. That is the apostolic way. We invite people to come out to hear preaching, but you hardly ever hear people say, "Come and worship with us." We magnify the preaching at the expense of worship. Whether they had a preacher or not, the early churches met and worshiped God. Almost every church in the land could have preaching, or at least worship every Sunday. You have heard the cry of shortage of preachers, have you not? It is alarming. The minutes of the Southern Baptist Convention show that we had nearly twice as many deaths in the ranks of the ministry as there were ordinations last year. (1919.) At the very time when the fields are white unto the harvest, and when we are raising more money for our general denominational work, fewer preachers are answering the call. Unless we pray as Jesus instructed us, that God will send out laborers unto the harvest, and call the young men and women from our churches and from our homes

into the mission work, the situation is going to be disastrous. Unless we begin to pray that prayer we are going to find ourselves without preachers and without missionaries to carry on the work.

But some do not go to church once a month. Some go only when a revival is in progress. One man of this kind was converted and made a fine worker in a revival meeting, but when the revival was over he quit coming to church altogether, but when the next revival began he was there. The brethren said to him one day: "We would like to know what is the matter with you. You were very active at the protracted meetings last year, but since that you have not come to church." He said, "I jined the big meeting, I didn't jine your little meeting." That is true of too many people. When we join a church we should feel that we are a part of the whole thing—Sunday school, prayer-meeting, and church services, for we are members of the church. Pastor, if you had all your members in this church, you would not have the Sunday-school record you have on that board there. That is not only true of this church. It is true of other churches. Church-members ought to be present at every service and help in the work. It says these disciples were teaching and preaching *daily*. We need to restore this every-day teaching and preaching Jesus Christ; "Always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your labor is not vain in the Lord." Some may say, "This is a very inopportune time to work." What seems to be the most inopportune time may be the best of times. You do not know what is an opportune time.

You have heard of Uncle John Vassar. He said he could not sway the great congregation; that he was the Shepherd's watch-dog to bring in the little lambs one by

one. He was a great personal worker. One day he was passing through a large city, and in the Union Station he saw a lady in the waiting-room who he decided was not a Christian. He began to tell her about Jesus, and her heart opened up and received the message. After he was gone, the husband of this woman came in, and she told him that while he was out an old man came up and asked if she were a Christian, and he said, "Why didn't you tell him him it was none of his business?" "Yes," she said, "husband, it was his business. If you had seen his face and heard his words you would have thought it was his business." He made it his business to talk about Jesus and his love. He went into a town to help in a meeting and as he was walking by a blacksmith-shop with the pastor, the pastor said to him: "Now, brother Vassar, that man in there is a blasphemer and an infidel; we can't do anything with him." "But," said Uncle John, "come on, we are looking for him." The pastor said, "We cannot stop now." "Yes, but we will"; and he stopped to talk with him, and got him down and prayed with him, and the man gave his heart to God and became a flaming evangel for the Lord.

I read some time ago of a preacher who had been out in an evangelistic service and who had his heart stirred with the spirit of evangelism, and that night when he returned home he prayed: "O God, if thou wilt forgive me and give me the presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit I will go anywhere and be anything for thee; just show me the way and I will go." When he arose the thought struck him, "Go and speak to a certain man." He said to himself, "That old fellow is a skeptic, and I cannot do anything with him." The impression came to him again, "Go and speak to that man." He said to himself, "He is not at home tonight," but the voice came

the third time, "Go and speak to that man." He said he was startled and said to himself, "I have just prayed and said I would go anywhere, and now I am making excuses." He said, "I will go." He picked up his hat and started, because the Spirit had indicated that he should go. He rang the door-bell, late as it was, and the man came to the door and said to the preacher, "What are you doing here this time of night?" And he said, "I have come to talk to you," and the man said, "All right, come in." The preacher said: "Tonight I was praying in my study and I promised God I would go anywhere and do anything he wanted me to do. The Spirit told me to come here and I have come to talk to you about your soul." The man said: "You have come at the right time, I am alone tonight; my family are all away from home. I don't know how I happened to be here, but tonight I sat down and got to thinking about my life, and how far I had drifted away, and I was so deeply impressed I could not go to the gambling-den or the saloon." God was not only getting the preacher ready to go, but was getting the man ready to receive the message. He got down and prayed with him, and the man settled the question of his salvation and became a glowing witness for Christ. Oh, if we were only willing to let the Spirit work through us and use us in his own way.

Another thing: If God is working on you to go and to speak to certain men, he is working on the other end of the line getting them ready to receive the message. God does not make mistakes, and if you will let God use you you will make no mistake. Go and do what the Spirit indicates—no matter whether you fail or succeed, apparently. He will take care of the consequences. Sometimes you speak to a lost man, and he gets mad and says ugly things; this is a good sign you have driven a nail in

the right place. You do the work and let God take care of the consequences.

II. Where They Preached

"In the temple." That was the place dedicated to this service. I have held meetings in places where people did not want me to go out on the streets preaching. I was in a certain city holding a meeting; nobody but Christians would come; the people seemed to be satisfied, they did not go out and try to bring folks in. I was amazed at the congregations sometimes at night. It was a good congregation, but not more than one could stand up when the invitation was given for the unsaved to stand. I said: "We must reach more people here. If they will not come to church, then, we must go out on the streets." They said, "Let them alone, if they will not come to church." I said, "Some people in the city don't know this church is here." I had my singer get an auto-truck, and have an organ and choir placed in it, and we went out on the streets and preached to more people than we ever got to church. Finally the permission of the Mayor was given to build a platform on Court Square, where I preached to great crowds of people. I tell you, people can get too stylish and too formal. Jesus Christ went to the people and preached to them. I am reminded of a thing Doctor Gambrell, of Texas, said a few years ago in the Southern Baptist Convention. He said, "Some of our churches are so stylish that if we were having a funeral, and the man in the coffin should wake up and find that he was not dead, he would be buried alive rather than get up and disgrace the church by breaking into the 'order of the service.'" Some care more for the order of service than for the salvation of sinners. It is true the church is set apart for preaching, but that is not the

only place where preaching ought to be done. This apostolic preaching was in the temple and in every house. They went from house to house preaching. Oh, how we need more of this apostolic from-house-to-house preaching. Every disciple ought to be a preacher in that sense. You can do that. If we could get every Christian aroused so that he would go from house to house telling what the Lord has done for him, we would have a great revival of religion. Are we willing to do it?

III. What They Preached

"Jesus the Christ." Whether preaching is valuable or not depends upon what we preach. The character of the preaching determines its value.

Reformation is a good thing, but reformation will not save men. If there is nothing more, however, men ought to reform. But a man might reform, not from a sense of conviction of sin, but from other motives. He might decide that his business would be better off. Some do that. I would encourage bad men to reform, but reformation does not save men. They must be born again, born of the Spirit of God, before they can enter into the kingdom of God.

Humanitarianism is a good thing, in the religious sense but not in the theological sense. In the theological sense it means, "I accept the humanity of Jesus but reject his divinity." I have no fellowship with anybody who rejects the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ. But humanitarianism means in the general sense looking after the human side, which is worth while, but the people who are working at the social service task are working at the wrong end of the job. Jesus did not come to fix up a world for men to live in, but to fix up men to live in the world. The corrupt heart must be cleaned up, and the rest will

take care of itself. A clean heart will produce a clean life. Instead of spending our time cleaning up the surroundings, let us get the people cleaned up, and they will clean up their surroundings. Civic righteousness is a good thing, and a sermon occasionally on this subject may not be out of place, but it does not compare with a sermon on "Christ and him crucified." The great need of the world today is to teach and preach Jesus the Christ. If we had more of that character of preaching we would have better results. Are you willing to go from house to house and preach Christ, telling what the Lord has done for you and what he is willing and able to do for others, if they will only let him? "If you hear his voice, harden not your heart." If you hear his voice, do what it says, and leave the result with God. Do it at all hazards. God will guide you in this work. "And daily in the temple and in every house they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus Christ." This is the character of service every Christian should render.

XII

THE GREATNESS OF SERVICE

"He who would be greatest among you, let him become the servant of all."—Luke 22 : 26.

It may seem strange to us at this distance from the Lord that there was a wrangle among the disciples as to who should be accounted greatest; not who should be the greatest, but who should be accounted the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. You recall too that there was one ambitious mother who said, "Master, permit my two sons to sit, one on thy right hand, and one on thy left." Jesus said: "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors; but ye shall not be so; but he that is greatest among you, let him become the servant of all."

There is a legend that once upon a time a man went out looking for a king. He had his peculiar notions about what it took to constitute a king. He said it took four things: First, the animals must obey him, secondly, the sun must be his servant, thirdly, the waters must flow and stop at his command, and fourthly, men must reverence him. He started out looking for this king. One day he saw a man out in his field herding his flock; by word of mouth or motion of his hand he could control them. He said to himself: "This man has one of the elements of a king; the animals obey him." He went into the man's house; the man took out his sun-glass and caught the rays of the sun and kindled his fire. He said: "He has the second element of a king; the sun is

his servant." Then the man invited the stranger into his fields in the valleys below. He opened up the flood-gates and irrigated his fields, and closed them up, and the water stopped. He said: "He has the third element of a king. The waters flow at his command and stop at his bidding." Then they went into a village near-by, and he saw that men revered this man and treated him with great respect. He said to the man: "Do you know that you are a king? You have every element of a king." The man said, "Yes, I know I am a king, but I am a king to serve and not to be served." The most kingly thing in this world is service, and the most queenly thing in this world is service. Jesus Christ came into this world to serve. He had the right conception of the kingship. "I am among you as he that doth serve." No man has the proper conception of life who fails to recognize the magnitude and moral dignity of service.

I. The First and Greatest Principle of the Christian Religion—The Principle of Service, or Self-giving

It has been said that the first law of nature is the law of self-preservation. The smallest insect or the most timid bird will fight to preserve life; and you know what desperate deeds men will commit to preserve life. Perhaps the most remarkable case of this kind in the United States was the Leo M. Franks case in Atlanta—the Jew who was sentenced to die for the murder of Mary Fagan, the girl murdered in the pencil factory. I am not expressing any opinion on the merits of the case, but using this to illustrate what desperate efforts and struggle men will put forth to preserve life. But the first law of the Christian religion is not the law of self-preservation, but the law of self-giving. This very fact proves to my mind that the Christian religion is not a natural religion,

but an inspired one. If it had been a natural religion, that is, one which grew up out of nature, it would have been like unto nature; it could not have been otherwise, for like begets like. Then the very fact that it is unlike nature and just like God, is sufficient proof that it came not up from nature but down from God.

The Christian religion is a religion of self-giving. First of all, we have *the example of Jesus in this self-giving.* He left the glory he had with the Father before the world was and took upon himself the form of a servant and became a man, lived a life of suffering and died a death of shame. When the devil took him into the mountain and offered him this world's glory if he would fall down and worship him, he pushed it aside and went to the cross. That was a crown for which the Cæsar would have fought, and for which the Kaiser fought; but Jesus said, "I have come to give my life a ransom for many." We not only have his example, but his precept as well. He took a towel and a basin of water and washed the disciples' feet, and said, "If I, your Lord and Master, wash your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet." I do not believe foot-washing is a church ordinance. If it had been a church ordinance there would have been some command to the churches to keep it, and some record of where some church did observe it, but there is neither. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are mentioned. Paul did deliver these two to the church at Corinth, but not foot-washing. If it had been a church ordinance, we would have had some record of some New Testament church's observance of it. There is no account of any of them ever observing it. "Did not Jesus command it?" Yes, he commanded us to fast and to pray and to forgive one another, and to love each other. These are commands but not church ordinances. What

could foot-washing mean as a church ordinance? An ordinance declares something but never procures anything. The Lord's Supper declares his death upon the cross. Baptism was instituted to declare and keep before us the burial and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have a complete picture of the death, burial, and resurrection in these two ordinances. But what would foot-washing symbolize? Well, some may say, "It would declare our humility." That would be the wrong thing, for that would show a lack of humility. Oh, that we could be humble without boasting about it. God never intended that we should advertise our piety. But Jesus gave foot-washing as a sample of unselfish Christian service. Here is an example—here is a sample. We not only have the example of Jesus, but also the example of the early disciples as well in this unselfish Christian service. It is said that Judas and Silas hazarded their lives for the cause. It was a hazardous thing then to follow Jesus, but these men went out as disciples of Jesus Christ and risked their lives. Noble women also, like Dorcas and Lydia, were splendid examples of this unselfish, Christian service. This was one of the distinguishing principles of the Christian religion. The heathen religions have some principles just as good as some in the Christian religion, but they have not this principle of self-giving. While they often sacrifice their children, they do not give themselves. But oh, how many Christians have sacrificed their lives for his cause!

II. Nothing so Exalts One in the Eyes of God or Man, as This Unselfish Service

The surest road to greatness is service. Why were Moses and Paul two of the greatest men that ever lived?

Maybe you say they were not. You may say some president or general was greater than either of these, but let me ask, How do you estimate greatness? The greatest man that ever lived is the one who has made the largest contribution to the world's permanent good; the man who has done most to lift up the world morally and spiritually. Then I think you will agree with me that Moses and Paul were the two greatest men in history. Of course, Jesus Christ is not put in this list, because he was more than man. Moses was in the king's palace and might have sat on the throne some time; who knows? But he preferred to live in God's service rather than to have a place of such prominence. He went down into Egypt, and lived with the slaves that he might serve them. Some may have said, "Moses is a crank, and he will die and be forgotten." But who were the men and the women in the king's palace when Moses was there? Their very names have perished; but the name of Moses is immortal because of his unselfishness. The very thing which his friends considered throwing himself away made his name immortal. Paul, no doubt, was a member of the Jewish Sanhedrin at one time. I imagine when he left that body with all its self-conceit and pomp and splendor they said, "Saul is crazy." But Paul's name will never die as long as the sun shines and the world stands. He was unselfish in espousing the cause of the lowly Nazarene, and this very unselfishness immortalized his name. Why is it that the name of William Carey shines the brightest star in the galaxy of missionary history? The road to greatness is the road through service.

Then again, *this unselfish service is sure to be recognized and rewarded.* That woman who broke the alabaster box of ointment had no thought of making her name immortal. Jesus said, "She hath done what she

the measure of our loyalty to Christ. The treatment we accord to his disciples, is the treatment we accord to him. How much do you love the Lord? What do you do for him? You tell me how you treat the disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, and I'll tell you how you treat him. You remember that Scripture I read, the last paragraph in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, you have done it unto me." The service we render to the disciples of Christ is the service we render to him. You cannot render a service to the Master directly. You cannot clothe him, you cannot feed him.

One of the best ways to serve Jesus is to propagate his principles in the earth. There is a story about a shoemaker who was very religious. He kept his own house, and as he pegged away every day on his bench, he thought about Jesus, and very naturally at night he dreamed about Jesus. He dreamed he met the Lord and he promised to come and dine with him. So the next day the shoemaker prepared the best meal he could; but Jesus did not come. He went out and looked up and down the streets looking for Jesus. He saw the crowds going to and fro, but nobody that looked like Jesus. Finally he saw a little ragged beggar-girl, and she was hungry and asked for something to eat. He said to her: "Come with me, and I will give you something to eat. I was looking for a friend today, but you can take his place, as I do not believe he is coming." She enjoyed the meal and went on her way. That night in his dreams the shoemaker met Jesus again and said, "Jesus, you did not come and dine with me yesterday." The Lord answered and said, "Did not a little beggar-girl come and dine with you?" The man said, "Yes." He then said, "Inasmuch as ye did it unto her, ye did it unto me." He was not looking

for Jesus in that guise. Tell me how you treated that little beggar-girl that came to your door, or that sick mother with that emaciated babe, or that old cripple man that was down and out and asked for help, and I'll tell you how you treated the Lord.

While I was pastor in Lexington, Mrs. Nowlin was down about eight weeks with inflammatory rheumatism, and I was staying with her about all the time. She was utterly helpless; I had to turn her in the bed and wait on her all the time, though we had a nurse. Saturday had come, and I had to prepare a sermon for Sunday, the next day. Sometimes people do not understand the trying circumstances under which the pastor has to prepare his sermons. Maybe everything is against him, and he cannot see how he can live and pay his honest debts and hold up his head; but no matter how trying, he must smile and go ahead. I was trying to prepare my sermon, and this very sermon, on that Saturday for the next day. I was making an outline and was at this very point when I heard a knock at the door. The girl was out in the yard with the children, so I went to the side-door and there stood a big, stout man who said, "I am very hungry, can you give me something to eat?" I said, "I think I can find you something," so I went to the safe and got a paper sack and put in some meat and bread and potatoes for him, plenty of food, such as it was. He thanked me, and when the man had gone, I went back to work on my sermon and I had to quote my Scripture to find myself, so I quoted the text, "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these, ye did it unto me." I said: "I wonder if that is the way I have treated the Lord today. I wonder if I have entertained an angel unawares today; if I had thought of that, I would have treated him better than that. I would have warmed

him up some food and brought him in to the table." That Scripture gripped me as never before, and I have never gotten away from it. Sometimes when I think of the treatment that we accord to our Lord by the way we treat the strangers at our door, I wonder how it is that the Lord can own some of us at all. But maybe you say, "The fellow that comes along begging does not deserve good treatment." Jesus looks not upon the deserts of the beggar, but upon the grace of the giver, and if you give in a disciple's name, you will receive a disciple's reward, no matter whether the beggar deserves it or not.

Again, the treatment we accord to the disciples of Christ is going to be the ground of our judgment. "These shall go away into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels." "Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not unto me." "Inasmuch as ye did it unto the least of these, ye did it unto me." "Come, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Some may ask, "Does not that teach salvation by works?" No, but it does teach, "By their fruits ye shall know them." I was preaching some years ago in Little Rock and was stopping with a brother Edmonson. One afternoon we were sitting out on the porch, and Mrs. Edmonson pointed out a persimmon tree and said, "Do you see that tree?" I said, "Yes, I see it." She said: "My father bought that tree some years ago for a pecan tree; it was labeled *pecan,* and we called it our pecan tree until last year it had a crop of persimmons on it, and since then we have called it a persimmon tree." It was not growing persimmons that made it a persimmon tree; it was a persimmon tree all the time, but the fruit told the story. The fruit you bear tells the story of your life.

Some time ago I was helping in a meeting at Mount

Sterling, and there was a certain man in that community who was described to me as being a sort of crack-brained fellow who went around to see every preacher that came to town. So he came to see me, and when he approached me, he said, "Well, are you the preacher holding the meeting up here?" and I said "Yes." He said: "Now, preacher, I am not a Christian, but I am no hypocrite. I cuss, but I'm not guilty of cussing in the presence of Christians, if I know it." He said, "I wish the legislature would pass a law requiring every Christian to wear a tag in his ear so I would know him, so I would not be guilty of cussing in his presence, embarrassing him and humiliating myself." That was a keen piece of sarcasm, and I had sense enough to see it. He meant that Christians around here live in such a way that you cannot tell them from anybody else. That is the worst thing you could say about a Christian—he needs to be labeled. If Paul lived in this community you would not have to ask whether he was a Christian or not. Are there some people in this community now such that you do not know whether they are Christians or not? The Book plainly teaches us how we may know Christians. It is "by their fruits ye shall know them." It is not the name you wear, but the fruit you bear, that tells the story. Do you live for the Lord Jesus Christ? How do you serve him? How do you treat his disciples? What evidence are you able to produce to the world that you are a Christian?

The way to be great is to be great in service. Link up your life with God, live the unselfish life; and rich will be your joys here and your rewards hereafter. But you must have the Christ life before you can produce Christian fruit. Your service will be great in proportion to the motive which produces it.

THEOLOGY LIBRARY
CLAREMONT, CALIF.

BX 6333 N6 D6

Nowlin, William Dudley, 1864-1950.
Does religion pay? : revival sermons / b
William Dudley Nowlin. -- Philadelphia :
Judson, 1923.
132p. ; 20cm.

1. Baptists--Sermons. 2. Evangelistic s
I. Title.

CCSC/dw